

# *RVLT*



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2009



## CONSERVATION

## CONTINUITY

## COMMUNITY

On behalf of the members of the Board of the RVLTL I would like to thank all the hikers and visitors to our site for respecting “Baby Season” time and leaving the animals nurture their young in peace and privacy.

And thank-you as well to our partners in the trail systems, ACA, Vallée Missisquoi River Nord and Sentiers de l’Estrie for their cooperation!

In the spring of 2005, the volunteer research team (of which I am a member) which collects data on 9 focal species on Trust land established the fact that parts of our holdings were core area for Black Bear, Moose and Fisher. In other words members of these species were not just passing through or using the land as a feeding area but also as a home range.

Board members were thrilled with the news, initially we improvised to cut off access but we also set about getting the funding for signage, etc to cordon off this sensitive area from mid- April to end June.

Once we were aware that we had a home range area, our research team spent many hours looking for possible baby sitter trees. Bears have a very special relationship to trees; when the cubs are very young and not able to travel long distances on their delicate little feet, mother finds a good sturdy white pine or hemlock tree in a secluded spot. In bear speak she tells her cubs to climb up the tree and hide in the branches, where they are safe and cool. She then goes about her business of searching for food. When she comes back, she calls them down and propped against the base of the tree, nurses her children. The same tree can get used year after year, by the matriarch and her daughters.

It was a very moving moment, when three years after the area had been regularly cordoned off during baby season; we found cub climbing marks on a secluded Hemlock.

We have this wonderful continuity on our lands both with the wild animals who reside there and the human communities that encircle our holdings.

Recently Jon Breslaw and Caroline Cram, who very generously gave us an eco-gift of 16 acres of woodland property on lac Sopala in memory of their fathers, invited us to the annual picnic of the Lac Sopala Association of which we are now a proud member. The association was created in 1988 by Jon Breslaw to preserve the natural qualities of the lake. Since 2002 a picnic pot luck celebration is held every summer at the lake. Since the 1960 beginning of the lake, children have grown up and had their own children, and grandparents have become great grandparents. Continuity, community and great food make for a wonderful event.

Photo credits: Claire Alger, Sue Morse, Stansje Plantenga, Betsy Piron, Stansje Plantenga



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### INFORMATION DESCRIBING CHARITY'S ACTIVITIES - 2008

#### THE OBJECTS OF THE RUITER VALLEY LAND TRUST, AS STATED IN THE CHARTER, ARE:

- To maintain tracts of land in perpetuity in the Eastern Townships of Quebec and elsewhere, as forest and open country for a view to the preservation of the wilderness, and to its enjoyment by members of the local community and the general public.
- To conduct such other activities as may help preserve the rural nature of the area, for example, the acquisition of land, the acquisition of development rights (easements and servitudes), the maintenance of productive farm and forest land, and the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries.
- To promote education and research into the conservation and proper use of our natural resources, human, physical and environmental, and to act as an information centre for other conservation groups and the general public. Results of any and all research will be published and made available to the public.
- To promote the concepts of preservation of the wilderness in schools and other institutions, through lectures, films, seminars and field trips.

**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**

**FUNDRAISING**

*Grants*

Successful applications were made to Memphramagog MRC Pacte Rural, Deputy, Pierre Paradis, the Caisse Populaire Desjardins and Potton.

*Events*

*Membership/Donors*

The majority of memberships were renewed along with a few new additions. The Trust is very appreciative of the long-term support and generosity of its donors.

**ADMINISTRATION**

*Office and Staff*

- General administrative overhead was again held to a minimum, as members, volunteers and directors all donated their time freely: Office space in the homes of board members and staff was provided as required.
- Isabelle Gregoire is our educator for the schoolchildren in Potton and Eastman.
- The composition of the Board is as follows: Stansje Plantenga (President), Marie-Claire Planet (Vice-President-Secretary) Guy Langevin (Treasurer), Daniel Sultan, Rick Petersen and Bobbie Summers, administrators.
- Meetings of the Board of Directors were held on Apr. 20<sup>th</sup>, in addition to several other working committee meetings held throughout the year; with Éric Deschênes; Isabelle Grégoire and ACA.

We held our Annual General Meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 along with, a presentation on Eco-tourism with the participation of ACA and the Valley Missisquoi North Back Country Trails.

Members of the Board were elected as follows: Guy Langevin Treasurer, Marie-Claire Planet Vice-President-Secretary, Stansje Plantenga President, Rick Peterson, Daniel Sultan and Bobbie Summers as administrators.



## **CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

### **PROMOTION RECREATION EDUCATION RESEARCH**

#### **Recreation and Networking**

##### *With the community:*

All RVL T trails are open to the public year-round. *Éric Deschênes* can be contacted on our website during the x-country ski season for an update on weather conditions.

- Board members are available to the community to answer any queries on Trust projects and activities.
- We can also be reached for updates on our programs at [www.valleeruite.org](http://www.valleeruite.org) or by email at [info@ruitervalley.org](mailto:info@ruitervalley.org).

##### *With the municipality:*

- The President acted as a liaison with ACA and the Municipality to facilitate planning for public access to the Green Mountain reserve area.

##### *Within the region:*

- The President attended the annual meeting of the Comité de gestion provisoire de la réserve des Montagnes vertes.
- The Vice President and Treasurer attended the annual ACA meeting.

#### RVLT as consultant to other Land Trusts

- The President continued in a consultant role to local conservation groups looking at using the "Faune sans frontières" program as part of their conservation strategy

##### *With NGOs:*

#### Memberships

- Union Québécoise pour la conservation de la nature (UQCN)
- Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA of Vermont)
- Missisquoi River Bassin Assoc. of Quebec
- Regroupement des milieux naturels (RMN)

#### Financial Partnership &/or working relationship

- Nature Conservancy Quebec
- Appalachian Corridor (ACA)
- Canadian Land Trust Alliance

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2009

### Education

- SCHOOLCHILDREN OF POTTON COUNTY AND EASTMAN MUNICIPALITY
  - 81 students from the Mansonville and Eastman French and English schools participated in a classroom session with Isabelle Grégoire on "Wildlife and Habitat" showing the rich complexity of our region, followed by a field outing. A second classroom session focused on theory and the upcoming student exhibits. This year at the Open House Exhibition each school voted on the best presentation. This activity was made possible with funding received from the Municipality of Pottton, the Memphramagog MRC Pacte Rurale, and Pierre Paradis, Deputy of Brome-Missisquoi.
  - PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:
    - Prepare the students to present on what they have learned to the their community;
    - Teach the students to understand and distinguish between the different types of animal sign and tracks;
    - Teach the students to understand and distinguish between the different types of native perennials
    - Teach the students to understand the importance of preserving different kinds of habitat;
    - Provide the opportunity for youths to teach others in their lives, their fellow students, parents and community members the importance of protecting a variety of habitats.
- KEEPING TRACK & TRACKING FLORA

The "education" principle of its mission is very important to RVL. On top of offering various timely workshops to raise awareness of flora and fauna, the Land Trust has participated actively in implementing, in the community, a training program for the identification of animal signs. Since 2002 "Keeping Track / "Faune sans frontières," has been offered to residents wishing to better understand animals and their habitat and to learn to identify telltale signs of their presence.

"Faune sans frontières/Flora" was offered again this year. This course given by Louise Gratton focuses on using the key system to identify different species of ferns, shrubs, trees and wildflowers.

### WORKSHOPS

#### WINTER 2009

Saturday, 14 march, 7:30 pm - wild canidae

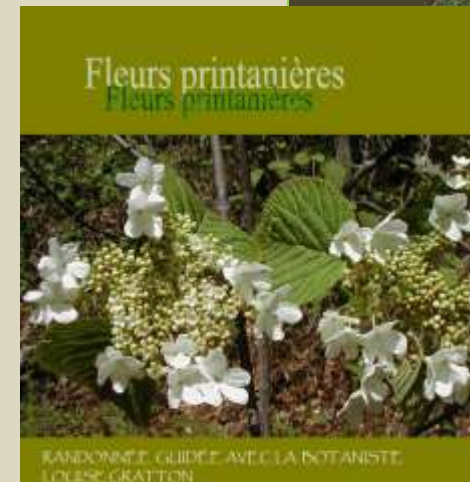
Conference by Sue Morse, well-known ecologist and founder of Keeping Track (Vermont)

Sunday, 29 March, 1:00 to 4:00 PM - How to identify tree buds

With Botanist Louise Gratton.

#### SPRING

May 31 Marche Thématique and Power Point presentation "The Treasures of our Peninsula" with Isabelle Grégoire starting at 9:30 at Mansonville Town Hall with Power point presentation followed by walk at the peninsula site





SPECIAL EVENTS

- Annual trackers Conference Sunday, 3 May
  - Participation restricted to trackers of the Keeping Track Program. Guest speakers: Louise Gratton of Nature Conservancy Canada and Conrad Reining of Wildlands Project, both actively involved in the « Northern Greens » cross-border project. The conference included a presentation by each team on their inventory and monitoring activities.
- Donor Day Celebration 17 May

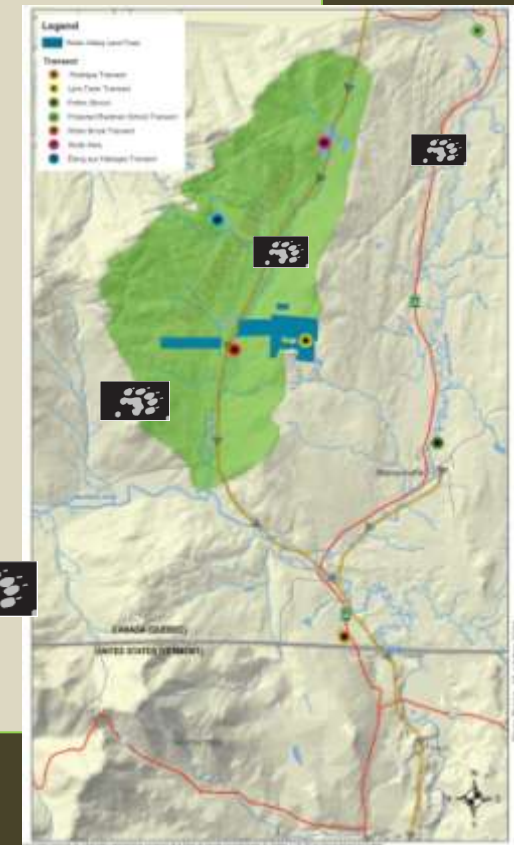
INAUGURATION OF SHEPHERD'S DREAM SECTOR



Robert's daughter, Anne, with her son Michael and Stansje, the founder's spouse.  
Photo : Daniel Sultan

The week-end of May 17<sup>th</sup> was marked by RVL's Donor's Day celebration. The event provided an opportunity to express our gratitude to our donors, members and volunteers who contributed to RVL's success towards land conservation over the years. Indeed, conservation project would not have been possible without the generous contribution of donors such as Joyce Booth, Stanley Lake, Anne Shepherd, Max Cowan, Stansje Plantenga and, of course, Robert Shepherd. The day started with a fascinating walk on spring flowers guided by well-known botanist Louise Gratton, and was followed by the inauguration of the Shepherd's Dream Sector in honour of the founder of our Land Trust. The event attended by over fifty people was wrapped up by a BBQ enhanced with music by Stanley Lake and the « Jazz Heads »

quartet. RVL took the opportunity to thank its many partners: La Table des MRC de l'Estrie, the Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement, the Memphrémagog MRC and the Municipality of the Township of Potton.





- TRAIL MAINTENANCE
- The forest interpretation panels on this sector were redesigned and updated.
  - As usual, autumn clean up and trail grooming in the winter was done by Eric Deschênes of Cultiv'Art. Eric patrols the trails regularly in winter and files reports on usage along with your comments! Thank-you to the volunteers who participated in the trail clean-up this year.

#### CONSERVATION

- SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
- The RFLT data base on the presence of Black Bear, Bobcat, Moose, River Otter, Mink and Fisher in the region now has 8 years of information from some of the sites. We anticipate working with biologists in the near future to draw conclusions and perhaps new directions from our studies. This is a tremendous volunteer effort. A BIG THANK YOU to all our trackers!

- ACQUISITIONS

Jon Breslaw and Caroline Cram donated 15 acres on Lake Sopala near the North western end of Potton Township. The area is to be called "The Wild Wood" after the magical woods in "Wind in the Willows". Mr. Breslaw had a vision of these woods remaining untouched and as result returning to the kind of forest that was present in Potton during Loyalist times. Vulnerable species that will be protected are Two-leaved Toothwort and Ostrich Fern. The maturity of several forest communities and the presence of several streams which offer a diversity of habitats and could possibly harbour two protected salamander species give a high ecological value. The Northern part of the property has the highest ecological value given a mature Hemlock stand, several streams and a small wetland.



Guy Lizotte (ACA) Stansje Plantenga (FFVR)  
Jon Breslaw Guy Langevin (FFVR) Caroline Cram

