



10.5TH EDITION – NOVEMBER 2009

OPENING MESSAGE, A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR, PROTECTED AREA, INAUGURATION OF LES ÉOLIENNES TRAIL, MASS HIKE, WILD LIFE RESERVE MAKE OVER, CONSULTATION, THE GASPE PENINSULA – A PLACE OF A LIFETIME, TEN REMARKABLE THINGS, A QUEBECER THRU-HIKES THE IAT AND THE AT, NEWFOUND LAND, CREATING MORE BONDS, COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WINTER TREK, SMALL AD, NEW MEMBER CARD, RENEWAL PERIOD, HIKERS GIVE THEIR COMMENTS



Opening Message

The IAT – QC is coming back with the last edition of the year. Fall is zooming past so fast that the staff in the head office barely had time to translate their tenth edition of the Member Journal. This edition will cover all the subjects of the tenth edition with add-ons so that you receive up-to-date information before the Christmas Holidays.

August and September were months in which many projects reached an end and new ones started. After working so hard over the past years, the IAT – QC is making gains.

October was dedicated to the preparation of the IAT general assembly. It is now time to prepare for end of the season. 2009 is not over and yet we are thinking about 2010.

Even though the IAT – QC hiking season is already over and most of Nature is dormant, this is great weather for going outside –and then coming back in. With another layer on, most outdoors activities can be done in great comfort. As snow will start to cover the ground, a peaceful silence will fill the air... Some days, you may only hear the crunch of the snow under your boots, skis, or snowshoes... When done playing in the cold, a cup of hot beverage will soon liven up the spirit, or make you want to slumber!

Winter can be enjoyed in various ways. Why not discover yours?

Marie-Pier Gauthier, Customer Service Agent

A Word from the Director

The year 2009 was a very active one for the IAT – QC and the upcoming months will be as much filled as the last ones. Maintenance and trail improvement tasks will keep on going over the winter (in workshops); we will keep on developing the Web site and information tools for the 2010 season; we will have a lot red tape to fill in regards with the grants that we received; and, more than anything, we will keep working for the creation of a new development plan (more information in the current edition of the Journal).

On that matter, consultations with regional committees are now taking place and the plan should be completed before Christmas Holidays. This important step will be followed by an approach for funds and we should start with the new plan in 2010. All members interested into participating to the consultation process are welcome to contact us and I am using this opportunity to invite you to the next annual general assembly in April 2010, where we are going to decide on a new mandate, in regards with the development plan.

If you took some time to read the past editions of the Member Journal, and if you take some time to read the present edition, you will realise how much our projects have progressed, how much communication has improved through the development of our new Web site, that the trail was maintained and that our surveys show that we can offer quality hiking experiences.

I am satisfied with these results, but with the conclusions underlined by the study of comparable trails (the first step leading to the development plan), we also realised that we still have a lot to do before considering ourselves an international-standard hiking trail.

Hopefully, our members and partners seem to be willing to keep on developing the trail and we should find a way to go ahead with the project.

To conclude, I want to thank Gaétan Roy for his implication in all current projects, and all regional committee representatives for being available and working in the trail. I would also like to underline the work done by Caroline Desrosiers and Marie-Pier Gauthier, our customer service agents for this season. They filled all required tasks and allowed us to improve a lot. If you have job offers for them, I recommend them☺.

Éric Chouinard, Executive Director and Secretary



The Committee for a Protected Area is Coming Out

The Committee for the Protection of the Chic-Chocs Mountains organized a press conference along with National Assembly Member Pascal Bérubé on September 21st. The Committee used this opportunity to raise awareness of their cause and to explain why they are calling for the creation of a protected area surrounding the peaks of the Matane Wild Life Reserve. The social and economic impacts of such an initiative were also covered.

Scientific and economic arguments were at the core of their presentation. This project is supported by 47 letters of approval from private and public organizations, including a resolution from the Matane Regional Municipal Council. With over 9.300 signatures, the petition that has been circulating for two years demonstrates that the project has received a huge support – such numbers are rarely seen in the National Assembly. Matane MNA Pascal Bérubé has given his support, has promised to bring the project to the National Assembly and to do a follow-up with the government.

Since the last public consultation, the size of protected area has been revised downward, covering 40% of the territory of the Reserve. It encompasses some primitive forests, that is, forests not yet affected by cuts and which are the most sustainable ecosystems we know of.

According to a third-party investigation, the forest industry would lose 13% of their current supply. With the development of the recreational and tourist potential of the Reserve, and the marketing of non fibre forest products such as mushrooms and edible plants, the committee emphasised that a wider range of employment will be available with the creation of the protected area. Nonetheless, these development initiatives depend on the preservation of the biodiversity and the quality of the Chic-Chocs landscapes.

Because of the wide temperature differences between base and peak, a mountain hosts a wide range of species. If the project goes ahead, the protected area will enable the survival of precarious animals and plants. Moreover, as the effects of climate change will become stronger, more and more animals in search for their former habitat will migrate towards the top of the mountains.

The integral version of the presentation of the Committee for the Protection of the Chic-Chocs (in French only) is available online at <http://www.chic-chocs.org/petition.php>.

INAUGURATION OF LES ÉOLIENNES TRAIL

A Second Breath for the IAT - QC

In L'Anse-à-Valleau, on Friday September 11th, the Les Éoliennes Trail was inaugurated, a trail loop connecting to the International Appalachian Trail in Québec (IAT – QC) in the Gaspé Coast area.



Gaspé Coast Committee members Jean-Marc Hardy and Jacques Chartier organized a press conference and officially opened the trail along with IAT – QC president Gaétan Roy and Cartier Wind Energy's public affairs director, Luc Leblanc. Mr. Frédéric Sainte-Croix, for Forillon Canada National Park and Mr. Éric Chouinard executive director and secretary for the IAT – QC were also present. Around fifteen people came to the conference and all were invited to walk the first 1.5 kilometers up on the trail to reach Jalbert Fall.

Gaétan Roy, president of the IAT – QC took the opportunity to thank Cartier Wind Energy for their support as well as the Entreprises Agricoles Forestières de la Péninsule, who undertook the building of the trail, and gave a special thank you to the men behind the agreement made in 2005, Mr. Guy Dufort from Cartier Wind Energy and Mr. Viateur de Champlain, president of the IAT – QC from 1996 to 2005.

“It is important for Cartier to contribute to the long-term development of the region,” said Luc Leblanc from Cartier Wind Energy. This leading company in the area of wind energy agreed to give the IAT - QC \$30 000 for the building of the trail and \$15 000 per year over a period of twenty years to maintain the Les Éoliennes Trail and to help the sustainable development of the IAT – QC.



This important contribution is coming at the right moment, mentioned Éric Chouinard, since the IAT – QC is working on creating a new business plan which will help perpetuate the trail. Mr. Chouinard also mentioned that the creation of short hiking loops such as the Les Éoliennes Trail will fill a need for one-day hikes and help retain more visitors in the Gaspé Coast region.

The 6.24 kilometer long loop features windmills in action and goes across various types of forests, including a cedar grove. The trail also features Victorin Lake and Jalbert Fall, which is one of the most beautiful of the area. This relatively easy, two-hour long hike is free and the trail can be accessed at any time during the IAT – QC hiking season.

Mass Hike in the Matane Wild Life Reserve

Over twenty people met on Saturday September 19th to participate in a hike organized by the members of the Matane Committee. The hike took place along Mount Charles-Édouard-Vézina and Mount aux Perches in the Matane Wild Life Reserve and was a success. The local population and some tourists re-discovered or discovered for the first time the secret beauties of the Reserve. It was an opportunity to watch moose and the flight of a royal eagle, a rare bird in the province of Québec. This initiative has been appreciated, since participants said they want to come back again.



Fall Make Over for the Wild Life Reserve



In August, the IAT – QC received grants from the federal and provincial governments that add up to over \$75 000. With that money, six forestry workers were hired in mid-September to improve and restore portions of the trail in the Matane Wild Life Reserve that had deteriorated because of the lack of maintenance. Such operations had not been undertaken for the past five years.

They are done cleaning up the Matane Wild Life Reserve section ever since. Various tasks, including a clean-up of blow down areas, and the widening of the trail on its whole length are now completed. Eight footbridges were built, and other construction work will take place over the winter.

The IAT – QC wishes to thank all the persons who volunteered to assist the workers and who keep being involved with the project: Gaétan Roy, Jocelyn Leclerc, Claude Carré, Eddy Pellerin, Louis Bouchard, Jean-Pierre Harrison, Nelson Saint-Pierre, and Éric Chouinard.



These improvements were made possible because of the financial support of the National Trails Coalition, Emploi Québec, the Conférences régionales des élus for Bas-Saint-Laurent and for the Gaspésie, and the Matane Wild Life Reserve (Sépaq).

Consultation in Good Progress

The IAT – QC has been struggling for many years to obtain funding that would enable it to offer a quality trail and to promote it. The IAT – QC asked consultant Jocelyn Guimont to analyse the problems related to the existence and the development of International Appalachian Trail in Québec (IAT – QC). This was the first part of a process that will lead to the writing of development plan, of a study of the actions that must be undertaken in order to raise the standard of the trail and to market it, and of a business plan. The main conclusion of the first completed step emphasized on the importance of keeping the growth and management of the IAT – QC in tune with the local and regional development.

The second step consists in meeting community partners and see which ones are ready to support the IAT – QC in executing a new development plan. Consultations with regional committees also are now taking place and the development plan should be completed before Christmas Holidays. The business plan that will come out of this consultation will enable the IAT – QC to legitimate their demands for fundings. With that, the organization hopes to promote and develop a safe and community-supported trail.

THE GASPÉ PENINSULA Destination of a Lifetime

National Geographic Traveler continued in its October 2009 edition its review of the fifty destinations of a lifetime. The Gaspé Peninsula was cited along with places like Easter Island, Mexico City, Gobi Desert and the Congress Library in Washington. The short article features the warmth of the inhabitants, the calm and the breathtaking scenery. The International Appalachian Trail is mentioned as a unique feature of the region. The article is available on the Internet site of the IAT – QC (<http://www.sia-iat.com/en/nouvelles.html>).

Ten Remarkable Things about Québec

Cyberpresse (electronic version of La Presse, a Québécois newspaper) published on November 11th an article about ten remarkable facts about Québec. The Québec portion of the International Appalachian Trail was cited as the longest hiking trail of the province. Other remarkable natural attractions such as the biggest lake, the place where tides are the highest, the biggest national park, and the highest cliff were featured. The article is available at <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/voyage/quebec-canada/200911/11/01-920502-10-faits-remarquables-sur-le-quebec.php> (in French only).

A Quebecer Thru-Hikes the IAT and the AT

On June 23rd, Simon Bourk started a 4.500 kilometer-long hike that will lead him to Mount Springer, Georgia, the southernmost point of the Appalachian Trail. He is among the few Quebecers who undertake such a challenge. He is by now in Pine Grove, Pennsylvania, 2688 kilometres away from Cap Gaspé.

The desire to take a walk, as he mentions it in the first lines of his blog (in French only: <http://unelonguemarche.ca/>), to make a break and realize a cherished dream motivated him to take a sabbatical year, to put his work and his occupations aside and to hike an eight-month long journey. Along with a friend, Adam Desrosiers, he zoomed through the Quebec section in in 30 days (the average being around 40 days). La Presse (a Québécois newspaper) published an article about him (in French only: <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/voyage/quebec-canada/200909/30/01-906882-huit-mois-sur-le-sentier-des-appalaches.php>). It is possible to follow and encourage Simon Bourk through his blog, *Une longue marche*, which is frequently updated.



*Picture – Simon Bourk on Mount Washington
Courtesy of Simon Bourk (<http://unelonguemarche.ca/>)*

NEWFOUND LAND CHAPTER Blazing Trail to Simm Falls



In July IATNL Trail Director Arne Helgeland and Treasurer Kevin Noseworthy made a trail blazing trek to Simms Falls, the first step in the development of a southern access to **Blow-Me-Down Mountain Trail**. From Simms Falls the trail will wind its way through Simms Gulch, onto the top of the mountains, then north to Cape Blow-Me-Down and Blow-Me-Down Brook in the beautiful Bay of Islands.

Picture - Following the completion of Blue Brook Access Trail to the Lewis Hills, work began on this important section of trail, which provides fantastic views of the Lewis Hills, Serpentine Valley and the Blow-Me-Down Mountains.

Creating More Bonds with the UK

Members of the Council of the International Appalachian Trails, which gathering all existing IAT chapters and all chapters to come, traveled to United Kingdom twice this year. Their goal was first to make known the link existing between the Appalachians and mountain chains in Scotland, Ireland and Wales (Caledonian chain) and to promote the IAT. The second objective was to propose an extension of the trail across the Atlantic. Council members were warmly welcomed in an enthusiastic atmosphere. Find out more through the following sites:

June 2009: Scotland and Ireland

http://www.internationalat.org/Pages/SIAIAT_News/I011706E7 (short article that was written before departure; it presents the upcoming trip and summarizes the geological history of the Appalachians and the Caledonians)

http://www.internationalat.org/Pages/SIAIAT_News/I011F6580.0/IATVIS~1.PDF (article published in the June 16th edition of the Western Star, a Corner Brook newspaper, Newfoundland)

http://www.internationalat.org/Pages/SIAIAT_News/I011F6597 (detailed report on the Scotland and the Ireland trip)

September 10th 2009: Ireland

http://www.internationalat.org/Pages/SIAIAT_News/I0126042B (report on the trip to Ireland)

The Council wants to establish similar links with Norway, Greenland, France, Spain and Morocco, as these countries have mountains that once cohabited with the Appalachians. The people met in the UK have been invited to the General Assembly of the Council in Prince Edward Island on the 29th to 31st October, where they will present the latest developments.

2009 IAT Council General Annual Assembly

The IAT Council general annual assembly took place on October 29th through October 31st in Stanley Bridge, Prince Edward Island. The Québec delegation was made up of three participants: Éric Chouinard, Executive Director of the IAT – QC head office, Marie-Pier Gauthier, customer service agent for IAT – QC and Geneviève Labonté, member of the board of the IAT – QC and co-owner of Nature Aventure. Representatives from Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador and Prince Edward Island chapters were also present. Guest speakers included PEI Tourism Minister Valerie Docherty and Binational Tourism Alliance¹ Executive Director Arlene White. Each chapter used this opportunity to show their achievements for 2009. Common issues were also discussed and a change of President and Vice President was made.

Using the opportunity given by the recent funding availability in response to the recession, Newfoundland & Labrador and Prince Edward Island built more trail, and Québec and New Brunswick did major maintenance. Nova Scotia looked for extension opportunities, and Maine did maintenance and participated to major hiking events in the United States.

2009 also saw the creation of new relationships with hiking trails in the United Kingdom and an approach should be made with Greenland by 2010.

The importance of marketing, especially via Internet, free newsletters, and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), of participating in hiking events, and of creating common working tools was also underlined. A common PowerPoint presentation has been worked on, and Newfoundland & Labrador showed a self-promotional video that was recently made by long-distance hiker, documentary producer Mark Flager. Newfoundland & Labrador should work on an electronic map that encompasses all existing chapters and Québec will keep working on information tools and on the creation of a customer service that would cover all IAT chapters.

When discussing on legal and administrative issues, the Council benefited from the advice of Binational Tourism Alliance Executive Director Arlene White who shared some of her experience of working in a multinational not-for-profit organization.

¹ The Binational Tourism Alliance is an incorporated, not-for-profit, membership-based organization created to market and support tourism product and destination in cross-border regions shared by Canada and the United States, whose mandate is: "To Eliminate the Barriers to Cross-Border Tourism Development and Raise Awareness of the Importance of Tourism and Cross-Border Communities to the North American Economy."

Being aware of the need for new leaders, Richard Anderson, founder of the IAT and Chairperson for the Council of the International Appalachian Trail, gave up his seat to IATNL Chairperson, Paul Wylezol and proposed Éric Chouinard to replace Mr. Wylezol as Council Vice Chairperson. Richard Anderson was named President Emeritus and promised to keep being involved with the IAT.

Finally, this meeting was an opportunity to inaugurate a new trail portion on October 31st. The Dromore Woodland Trails are a new portion of the IAT in Prince Edward Island as well as a trail network that can be used for short hikes.

The next IAT Council general annual meeting will take place in New Brunswick in 2010 and Québec will host the 2011th edition for the tenth anniversary of its inauguration. All IAT members can participate.

Winter Trek

The IAT – QC has a winter offer for a portion of its trail in Matapédia Valley this year. The “sentier des monts Clark” (Mount Clark Trail) consists of 19 kilometres of ungroomed trails connecting two refuges (Turcotte and Corbeau). This intermediate course is available for backcountry cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. For more information, please visit the http://www.sia-iat.com/en/rando_hiver.html.

Small Ad

A camera was found in the trail. Please phone (418) 562-7885 or e-mail to info@sia-iat.com to claim it.

New Member Card



The IAT – QC has recently created new member cards. Lifetime members and regular members now have a card with improved design.

The lifetime member card is offered in three different designs: Sunset, Steep Hill, and Cap Gaspé. Every lifetime member receives the card that they prefer.



The regular member card is in colour but it is more sober and one design only is available. All 2009 hiker members will receive their card before Christmas Holiday. This card is issued upon application and not upon renewal. The same card should be reused over the years.



The IAT – QC is inviting you to take good care of your card and to show it to your relatives when sharing about the cause you are supporting.

RENEWAL PERIOD

Bring in a Friend!

The IAT – QC invites all 2009 members to renew their membership as soon as possible and to recruit a friend or a family member. Being a member of the IAT – QC is a small support that goes a long way. Need some arguments? Here are some!

- It helps maintaining the trail so all can benefit from a clean and safe trail that keeps being better;
- It shows that the trail is supported by the community;
- It can help getting more funds from the governments and businesses;
- It is an action for the environment;
- The trail is a legacy for future generations.
- The trail is all there for you and/or your friends to enjoy without access fees and at low rates.

You will receive a renewal notification. Remember that in the last general assembly, it was decided that all members are members until they write to the IAT – QC that they don't want to support anymore and thus, receive no more correspondence. It was also decided that April 22nd, Earth Day and IAT/SIA's birthday, be the limit date for renewal. If you do not wish to renew, please let us know via mail, or e-mail, or the renewal notification. If, in the end, you feel that this is a project in good progress, please renew as soon as possible, share your enthusiasm to others, but more than anything else, keep walking and enjoying the trail!

The IAT – QC is hoping to count you as a 2010 member and to hear from your experiences on the trail.

With all due respect,

The IAT – QC Team

Hikers Give Their Comments

The IAT – QC asked all hikers who made a campsite reservation to fill in a survey about the trail, the service partners, the reservation service, the quality of the given information and about their overall satisfaction. The hikers who answered the survey were generally satisfied and those who pointed out flaws mentioned already-known problems and their comments underlined the importance of having a more elaborate and better-funded organization. Here are some comments that will entice you to explore the trail and support its cause.

“We wish to congratulate you for the quality of the main trails [...]. Overall, the blazing, the signage and the maintenance were pretty much perfect. There are many beautiful views and wonderful trees along the trail.”

Gilles Bouchard, member of Rimouski Hiking Club

“Keep up with your great work!”

Gisèle Grandbois, Québec (became member for life this season)

“Thank you for all your work and dedication to the trail!”

Beth Zimmer, New Hampshire, United States

“The trails and scenery were absolutely beautiful. As we approached the end the trail runs along the Gaspé Bay shoreline and the views just kept getting better.”

Andy Cropley, BSA Troop 1776 – Neshanic, New Jersey, United States

“Our hike on the IAT was a beautiful experience; we enjoyed ourselves a lot in spite of the great difficulty of the route and we would like to come back so we could hike up until the end.”

Jean-Luc Malaret and Agnès Juraszek, Louversey, France

“It was an unforgettable experience. The [Matane] was very rugged, difficult and challenging. Slow going for even experienced hikers. The trail in the Gaspésie Park was less challenging, and easier hiking. I feel that there is still much work to be done in the [Matane ...] We plan to do a slide-lecture program of our hike at a monthly meeting on the New Hampshire Section of the Appalachian Mountain Club. It is hoped that by doing so we could introduce others to the wonderful experience of hiking the IAT in [the Matane] and Gaspésie sections of the IAT.”

Gordon Dubois, New Hampshire, United States



Beautiful sunset on Matane Lake, a gift from Andrée Rochette, Saint-Amable

Happy Holidays!

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