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Celebrating our 15-year anniversary

What began as a simple observation, a light appearing on the mountainside where there had only been darkness, sparked a movement. A small group of residents, with no formal background in conservation, recognized that the forests surrounding Lake Massawippi were more than beautiful landscapes. The forests were vital habitats, places of quiet, and part of a fragile ecosystem increasingly at risk from development.

Driven by this shared concern, the founders* set out to learn. With guidance from experienced organizations, they built the knowledge needed to act. From these early efforts, two sister organizations were created: the Massawippi Foundation, to raise funds, and the Massawippi Conservation Trust, to protect land in perpetuity.

From the outset, their vision extended beyond conservation. While most funds raised support land protection, a portion is reinvested locally—supporting initiatives such as the Ayer's Cliff Farmers' Market, the Île du Marais, and local health services. This reflects a belief that a healthy environment and a strong community go hand in hand.

Public access also became a guiding principle. The founders chose to share the land by creating ecologically

responsible trails and access points like Ethan's Beach, promoting well-being and a connection to nature—especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fifteen years later, the organizations remain volunteer-driven, guided by dedicated board members and trustees, and grounded in four tenets: conservation, research, recreation, and education. Today, a skilled seasonal team builds and maintains the trail network with exceptional care. Though these trails feel public, they exist thanks to the Trust, donor support, and a shared commitment to stewardship.

To date, over 2,061 acres have been protected and we oversee 35 kilometres of trails. While our public trails are what we are most widely known for and are the most visible part of our work, conservation remains at the heart of everything we do.

Through our education program, we work with nine local elementary schools, nurturing curiosity and fostering a deeper connection to the natural world, helping inspire the next generation of conservationists.

This shared landscape belongs to all of us—its future depends on the care and commitment we choose to give it today.

**Founders. See page 7*



Table of contents

The Wonder Years!	3
Vision & Mission	4
Our Journey	6
Tribute to our Founders	7
Our Accomplishments and Ambitions	8
Protect the nature we love	9
You can make a difference	11
Massawippi Watershed Map	12

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The Wonder Years!

It is a privilege for me to serve as the Chair of the Massawippi Foundation and to work alongside the many dedicated volunteers who bring our organization to life. We are a small team, but thanks to your support, year after year we achieve feats that are larger than life!

As we celebrate our 15th anniversary, we are incredibly proud of what we've accomplished in these early years: protecting 2,061 acres of important natural habitats, establishing and maintaining 35 km of public trails, and running a nature education program that reaches hundreds of students in our region every year.

This is the power of a true citizen-led movement, founded on trust, generosity, and a shared commitment to protecting the Massawippi Valley.

A major achievement from the past year perfectly illustrates what our ambitious organization can accomplish: the successful transfer of the Tomifobia Nature Trail to the Massawippi Foundation and the Massawippi Conservation Trust. A long-term process that required perseverance, collaboration, and a culture of deep trust.

Thanks to the vision of its founders and the contributions of many partners, this 19-kilometre multipurpose trail, renamed the Tomifobia Trail, is now preserved forever and will be carefully managed for generations to come.

We are also embarking on an important new phase. We are delighted to welcome **Mélanie Lelièvre** as Executive Director. A recognized leader, Mélanie brings extensive experience, strong partnerships, and a clear vision for the future. She arrives at a pivotal moment, ready to build on the momentum and legacy that **Margot Graham Heyerhoff** has built over the past fifteen years. Her leadership and determination strengthen our ability to protect sensitive ecosystems while expanding the reach and impact of our programs in the region.

With our new strategic plan, we remain firmly focused on conservation, education, and community. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors. We invite you to renew or deepen your commitment through a monthly donation, an annual contribution, or a special gift. Your support directly protects the natural habitats, trails, and programs that define this extraordinary place.

Together, we can realize our vision of **a green and flourishing Massawippi Valley, for all and forever.**

Thank you for being part of our story.

Jonathan (Joff) Elkas,
Chair of the Board of Directors
Massawippi Foundation



Jonathan (Joff) Elkas

The Massawippi Foundation and the Massawippi Conservation Trust acknowledge that lands that we have protected in perpetuity stand on the unceded ancestral territory of the Wabanaki Nation (Abenaki), the Ndakina. We acknowledge that their history and relationship to this land and the water that flows through it, inspire us and guide our conservation work in our role as guests and stewards of the land.

Vision

A green and flourishing Massawippi Valley—for all and forever.

Mission

To support the Massawippi Conservation Trust in the protection and stewardship of sensitive ecosystems within the Lake Massawippi watershed, and to fund community projects that provide environmental, educational, recreational and social value.

Values

- Generosity
- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Gratitude
- Trustworthiness



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Who We Are

The *Fondation Massawippi Foundation* (Foundation) was established in 2011 and is the primary fundraising arm of the *Massawippi Conservation Trust* (Trust). The Foundation is incorporated under Part III of the Quebec Companies Act as a not-for-profit organization.

The Massawippi Foundation's priorities are to:

- Lead capital campaigns (*land and endowments*);
- Fund land protection and conservation projects;
- Build partnerships with stakeholders and municipalities;
- Fund an Educational Program;
- Give grants to other registered charitable organizations who work in the community to support their work.

The *Massawippi Conservation Trust* is a conservation entity established in 2011 that owns, conserves, and protects properties in the Massawippi Valley watershed in perpetuity. The Trust is the sister organization of the Foundation.

The Trust:

- is a Canadian registered charity which allows it to issue tax receipts in Canada for donations;
- builds and maintains walking trails for the public;
- authorizes research activities on its lands;
- is a registered charity in the Massawippi Watershed, certified by Revenue Canada and Environment Canada to acquire and assume stewardship responsibilities for conserved property.

Our charitable registration number is **836902601 RR 0001**



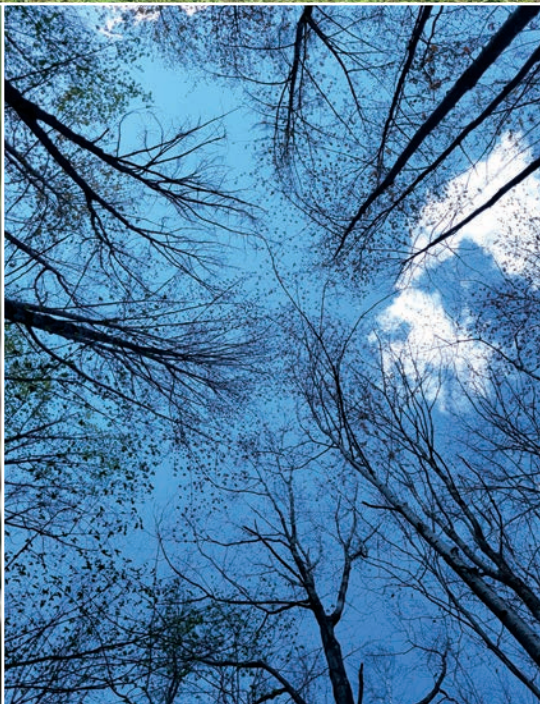


Photo : Ben Gauthier



Our Journey

2009 ~ David Rittenhouse attends a presentation by Tom Wilcox on land conservation and community philanthropy. Together with Pat Webster, they begin exploring opportunities to protect the natural heritage of the Massawippi Valley.

2010 ~ A group of local citizens gathers at Manoir Hovey to discuss land conservation and community philanthropy, laying the groundwork for what would become the Massawippi Foundation and Massawippi Conservation Trust.

2011 ~ Margot Heyerhoff joins Pat, David, and Tom as co-founders. They raise \$100,000 in start-up funding. Louise Ransom donates five acres of pristine lakeside property, establishing the Trust's first protected property. The Foundation also begins supporting community initiatives and local organizations.

2012–2013 ~ The Foundation provides grants to a variety of community organizations, supporting local culture, recreation, education, and social services.

2014 ~ The Wardman family donates 420 forested acres. The Foundation raises \$1.2 million to protect 57.5 acres of undeveloped lakefront property and continues supporting local health and community projects.

2015 ~ Conservation servitudes are established on more than 230 acres of pristine lakeside land, and additional property is acquired on Checkerberry Hill.

2016 ~ An agreement is reached with the village of North Hatley, the Township of Hatley, and the Scowen family to protect the site in perpetuity and make it accessible to the public.

2017 ~ The Massawippi Trail is officially dedicated in a ceremony that brings together community members and Abenaki leaders, marking a significant milestone for the region.

2018–2019 ~ Additional conservation agreements are secured, trail development continues, and schoolchildren help plant trees in Scowen Park. The Foundation raises \$1.1 million to protect another 390 acres on the west side of the lake.

2020 ~ The opening of Ethan's Beach celebrates the protection of more than 1,200 acres and the creation of more trails, providing public access to some of the region's most beautiful natural areas.

2021 ~ Celebration of the 10th anniversary. Additional land is acquired, bringing hundreds more acres under protection.

2022 ~ New trail sections are completed, partnerships strengthen winter trail access, and the Outdoor Education Program is launched at Scowen Park. Open Garden Days attract thousands of visitors and raise significant funds. H           is hired as the Foundation's first Executive Director.

2023 ~ On the invitation of Appalachian Corridor, Margot Graham Heyerhoff speaks at COP15 on biodiversity in Montreal. New conservation agreements protect additional lands, including wetlands and the Burroughs Falls Park.

2024 ~ New conservation servitudes are established, additional trails open, and key landmarks are named in recognition of major donors and founding volunteers. *Tom's Dream Trail* is dedicated in his honour.

2025 ~ The Grade 5 Outdoor Education pilot project begins. The team expands to support trail development, the Burroughs Falls Park trail opens, and three new conservation servitudes add 348 acres to the protected landscape.

2026 ~ The inauguration of the Tomifobia Trail marks another important milestone. More than 40 additional acres are donated for conservation, and M           joins the organization as Executive Director, continuing a journey she has followed since its earliest days.



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A Tribute to Our Founding Members

Margot Graham Heyerhoff (2011–2026, trustee 2022–present) ~ Margot's passion for conservation and her attachment to the region extend far beyond her involvement with the Foundation. A well-known figure in the community, she is chair of the North Hatley Library, founder of the non-profit Gillygooly Art Gallery and owner of an organic farm. She works actively with other landowners to encourage responsible land management.

Thanks to her patience and her understanding of the heritage and financial benefits of conservation, she has supported many families in protecting their land. At the end of her term on the board of directors, Margot will continue her commitment as a trustee to help preserve the region's natural landscapes, which she particularly cherishes.

Norman Webster (trustee 2011–2018) ~ A renowned journalist, keen sportsman, founding member of the foundation and one of the trust's first trustees, Norman grew up in Sherbrooke and North Hatley, where he developed a deep love of nature.

Although he has lived and worked all over the world, Norman has always remained deeply attached to the Eastern Townships. Committed to preserving the region's natural beauty and biodiversity for future generations, he and his wife Pat helped establish the foundation and the trust. They also set aside 86 acres of their family estate overlooking the lake and the natural landscapes that Norman held so dear.

Patterson (Pat) Webster (2011–2022) ~ A globetrotter, author and blogger born in the United States, Pat renounced her American citizenship to become a Canadian and settle in the Eastern Townships, in North Hatley. As a founder, she was a staunch supporter of the foundation's conservation and trail development objectives, convinced that contact with the forest inspires a love of the land.

Pat retired in 2022 after holding various roles on the Board of Directors. The Massawippi Foundation thanks her for her dedication, wisdom, and sound advice.

Thomas (Tom) Wilcox (2011–2024) ~ Tom served on the Foundation's Board of Directors, notably as Chair of the Development Committee. He was a trustee of the Trust from the very beginning, drawing on his knowledge to launch conservation work thanks to the first land donation from New Yorker Louise Ransom. His family has been visiting the region since 1890.

A former Chief Executive of the Baltimore Community Foundation and former Head of Concord Academy, Tom has always been able to mobilise resources and bring people together to tackle challenges affecting the lake and the community. His unifying spirit and storytelling skills have helped build a strong network of donors who continue to support the Foundation's mission to this day. We thank Tom for his talents, which continue to help us and support our mission.

David Rittenhouse (trustee, Executive Director 2010–2011) ~ Although his involvement was short-lived, the Foundation and the Conservation Trust would not exist today without David's leadership and hands-on commitment during their formative years. His work in researching and establishing the structures of both organisations laid the foundations for everything that followed.

Alongside Margot, David, first Executive Director, met with community groups and landowners to promote conservation at a time when its importance was less widely recognised. His vision and sense of urgency helped launch a movement that continues to protect our region today.



Left to right: The late Norman Webster with Pat Webster, Tom Wilcox, Margot Graham Heyerhoff, and the late David Rittenhouse.

Our Achievements and Ambitions

Conservation

At the heart of our mission, our conservation efforts now extend beyond the shores of Lake Massawippi. We are currently protecting a variety of natural habitats that are essential to the health and resilience of our ecosystems.

By 2030, we aim to expand our network of participating landowners and increase the area under protection by 60 per cent, from 2,016 to 2,965 acres.

Access to nature

Facilitating access to nature through our various trails is a recognised way of contributing to the wellbeing and health of the whole community. Today, our organisation manages and maintains nearly 35 kilometres of walking and cycling trails.

Looking ahead, our priority is to maintain the quality of the experience offered on our trails and to ensure that access remains free of charge.

Research

Our organisation actively contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge by making our protected areas accessible to research teams and by developing projects that meet our own needs.

It is in this spirit that a state-of-the-art geomatics platform was recently created, in collaboration with Bishop's University, to better identify the sites with the greatest potential for improving water quality in the catchment area.

Over the coming years, we aim to strengthen our links with the academic community to support research into the conservation of natural habitats and their role in adapting to climate change.

Education

Our educational activities are based on a simple belief:
"We love what fills us with wonder, and we protect what we love."

Every year, we share this sense of wonder with more than 350 primary school pupils from nine schools in the region. Our bespoke educational programme includes three nature outings per school year, led by our passionate facilitators.

Looking ahead, we aim to raise awareness among even more children about the importance of nature and to nurture a new generation of engaged citizens, by involving new schools and extending the programme to pupils in years 5 and 6.



Protect the nature we love

We need you!

Our region's biodiversity is exceptional. It is entirely possible to protect nature on private land. Do you own a forest or a wetland and want to see it protected forever? Here are the options available to you.



Transferring your property

You can part with all or part of your property. This can be done through a donation, a sale, or a combination of both, depending on your tax situation. The **Trust** then becomes the owner—you are no longer responsible for the land or the taxes associated with it.



Remain the owner through a conservation agreement

A conservation servitude is a notarised agreement that allows you to preserve important natural habitats whilst remaining the owner. Each agreement is unique, as it is tailored specifically to your land. The agreements are perpetual—they remain in force upon the sale or transfer of the property. The **Trust** is responsible for ensuring compliance with the agreement in perpetuity.

All conservation actions carried out through a donation are eligible for a charitable receipt, whether it is a transfer of ownership or a conservation servitude. Tax credits and other tax benefits (*including capital gains exemption*) can be very advantageous.

We take care of everything!

Support at Every Stage

Thanks to the expertise of our team and our partner, **Appalachian Corridor**, we support you through every stage of the process: ecological surveys, administrative procedures, and legal formalities. Furthermore, rest assured—we cover all costs associated with this process. There is therefore no cost to you as a landowner wishing to protect your land.

The **Trust** will ensure the health of the protected natural areas and their monitoring, in accordance with the landowners' wishes.

The **Massawippi Conservation Trust** is recognised by the federal government's Ecological Gifts Programme.

Do you have any questions, or would you like to discuss this further with us? We would be delighted to assist you.



Donation of the Tomifobia Trail from Sentier Massawippi (aka Tomifobia Nature Trail) to the Trust ~ L to R: Richard Violette, President; Normand Brière, Trustee; Margot Graham Heyerhoff, Trustee; Michael Sudlow, Vice-President



“

It has been a hell of a journey. We began alone, a small group of local volunteers, but we are no longer alone. Our small community has given us over \$8.81 million in cash. We have been given or purchased close to \$50 million worth of protected land that will be protected in perpetuity. We have built ecologically friendly trails, opened our land to important research, built an education program and become a mentor to other nascent conservation groups.”

“We have done and can do great things, but increasing economic and climate change pressures are forcing us to do more. The pressure is on all of us to move faster because we don’t get a second chance to conserve land. When it’s gone, it’s gone forever.”

—Margot Graham Heyerhoff,
Founder and Trustee

You can make a difference!

By making a donation, you help protect the beautiful Massawippi Valley and support the Foundation's many initiatives. Whether through the conservation of natural areas, education, community outreach, or projects that bring people together, your generosity helps preserve this exceptional natural heritage for present and future generations.

Donations (*a tax-deductible contribution*)

- **Cash Gifts**
Make a one-time or recurring gift to support our ongoing conservation efforts and programs. Every dollar makes a direct impact.
- **Annual Gifts & Pledges**
Consider making a yearly commitment or pledge a gift over time to provide sustained support for our long-term projects.
- **Matching Gifts**
Many employers match charitable donations. Check if your company has a matching gift program to double—or even triple—your impact.
- **In Memoriam or Tribute Gifts**
Honor a loved one's memory or celebrate a special occasion with a donation.
- **Gifts of Securities**
Donating stocks, bonds, or mutual funds can provide you with significant tax advantages while helping to secure the Valley's future.
- **American Donors** can receive a USA tax deduction by giving to the Trust through the *American Friends of Canadian Conservation*, designating *Massawippi Conservation Trust* as the recipient.

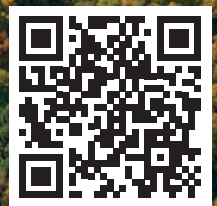
Legacy Gifts

- **Bequests**
Include the *Foundation* or *Trust* in your will to leave a lasting legacy of environmental stewardship.
- **Life Insurance Policies**
Name us as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy to provide meaningful support without affecting your current financial situation.
- **Charitable Remainder Trusts or Other Planned Giving Vehicles**
These options can provide you with income during your lifetime while making a powerful contribution to conservation.

Volunteer Time

- **Lend a Hand**
From trail awareness and stewardship to education and outreach, your time and talents can help us carry out our mission on the ground.

For the past 15 years, our community has been making a real difference in land conservation. We thank you in advance for your involvement and support. Join us in writing the next chapter of this adventure and preserving the region's natural treasures for future generations.



massawippi.org/
donate/

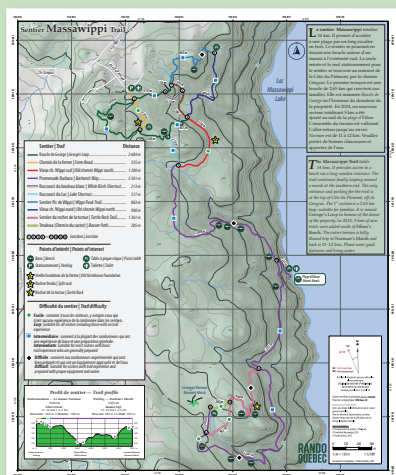
Bassin versant du lac Massawippi

834 hectares protégés à ce jour, et ce n'est pas fini !

La vallée Massawippi est une communauté régionale rassemblée autour d'une identité partagée, que la Fondation soutient activement. Elle englobe les cinq municipalités autour du lac : North Hatley, Hatley, le Canton de Hatley, Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley et Ayer's Cliff.

Le bassin versant du lac Massawippi regroupe tous les cours d'eau qui se déversent dans le lac et marque le périmètre naturel des interventions de la fiducie et de la fondation. Il s'étend bien au-delà des municipalités qui entourent le lac—il touche même le nord du Vermont. On y retrouve cinq grands types de milieux : des terres agricoles, des zones

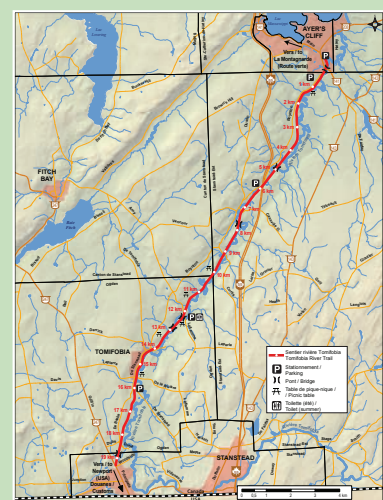
habitées (avec routes et bâtiments), des lacs et des rivières, des forêts, ainsi que des milieux humides. En matière de conservation, il est essentiel de reconnaître que chaque milieu possède ses propres caractéristiques, usages et impacts sur l'environnement. Certaines zones sont donc plus fragiles ou névralgiques que d'autres.



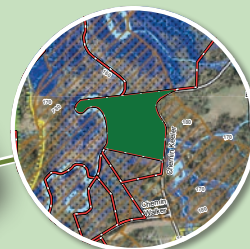
Sentier mont Massawippi Mountain Trail



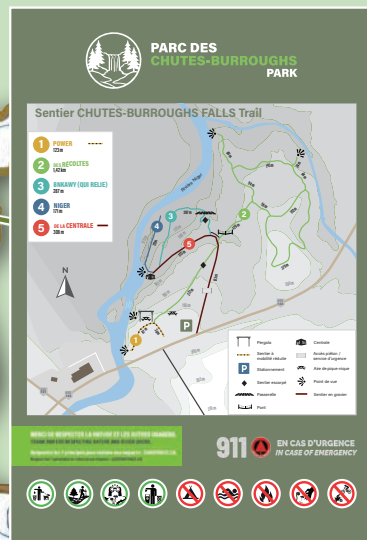
Sentier Scowen Trail



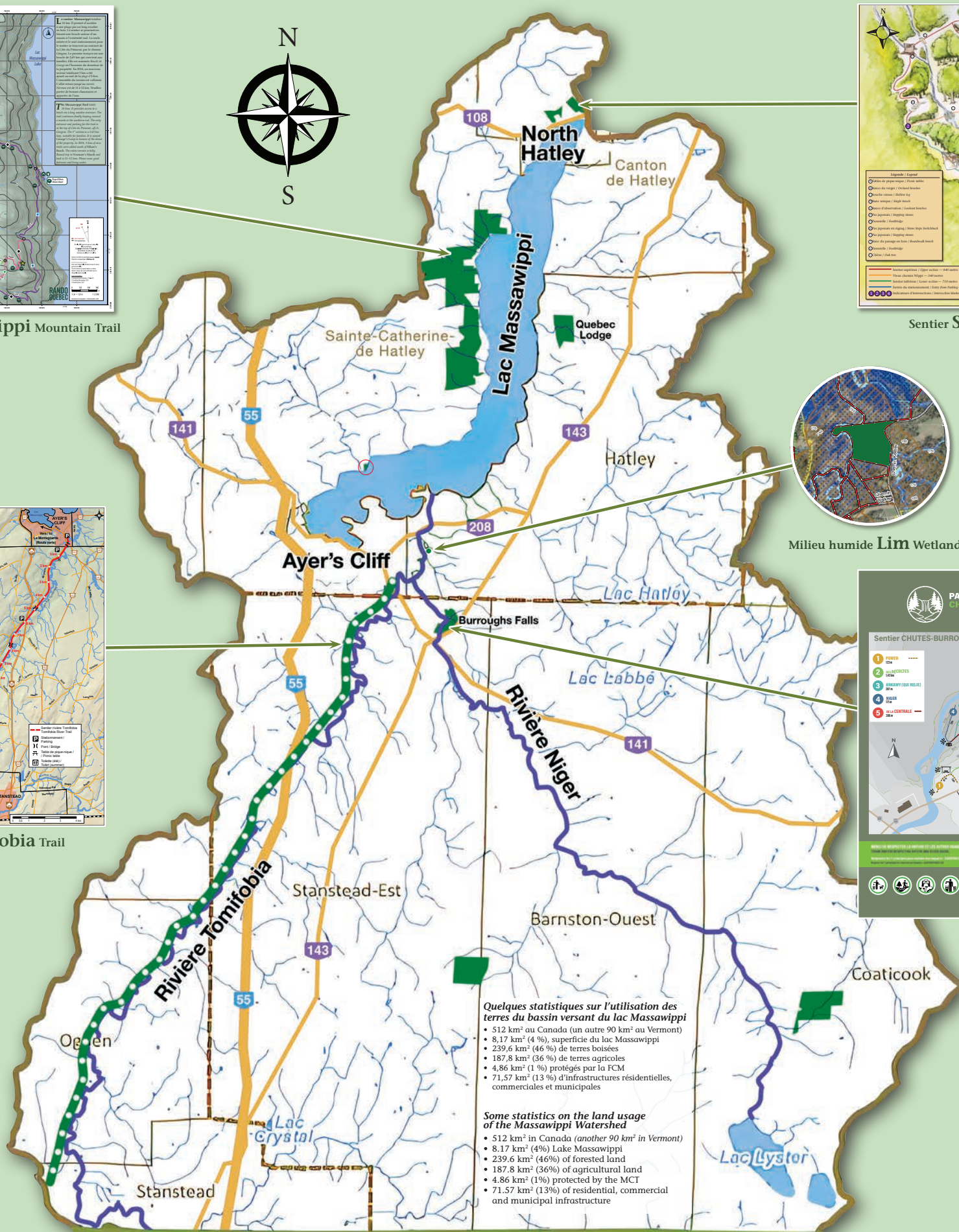
Sentier Tomifobia Trail



Milieu humide Lim Wetland



Sentier des Chutes-Burroughs Falls Trail



Quelques statistiques sur l'utilisation des terres du bassin versant du lac Massawippi

- 512 km² au Canada (un autre 90 km² au Vermont)
- 8,17 km² (4 %) superficie du lac Massawippi
- 239,6 km² (46 %) de terres boisées
- 187,8 km² (36 %) de terres agricoles
- 4,86 km² (1 %) protégés par la FCM
- 71,57 km² (13 %) d'infrastructures résidentielles, commerciales et municipales

Some statistics on the land usage of the Massawippi Watershed

- 512 km² in Canada (another 90 km² in Vermont)
- 8,17 km² (4%) Lake Massawippi
- 239,6 km² (46%) of forested land
- 187,8 km² (36%) of agricultural land
- 4,86 km² (1%) protected by the MCT
- 71,57 km² (13%) of residential, commercial and municipal infrastructure

Propriétés protégées par la fiducie / Trust protected properties

Lake Massawippi Watershed

2,061 acres protected to date, and we're not done!

The Massawippi Valley is a regional community identity served by the Foundation. It includes the five municipalities around the lake: North Hatley, Hatley, Hatley Township, Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley, and Ayer's Cliff.

The Massawippi Watershed includes all the water that flows into Lake Massawippi, forming the natural boundary for Foundation and Trust activities. It stretches beyond the municipalities surrounding the lake and even dips into northern Vermont. We can break the watershed down into five different types of

areas: farmland, developed spaces like roads and buildings, water bodies (lakes and rivers), forests, and wetlands. In conservation, it's important to recognize that each type of land has its own personality—along with its own uses and ecological impacts. As a result, some areas are more critical or sensitive than others.