

## Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve brings 215 acres of new conservation to Morin Heights

**Project is latest in series of municipal, developer,  
and community collaborations.**

March 5, 2019 – MORIN HEIGHTS – The newly created *Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve* will add 215 acres of conservation to a series of connected municipal green spaces. The project is a collaboration between the municipality of *Morin Heights*, developer *Invesco Habitation*, and the *Lac Echo Buyers Club*: an informal collective of concerned citizens. *La fondation de la faune du Québec*, and the *Echo Foundation* provided additional funding. *The Nature Conservancy of Canada* acted as advisor.

Morin Heights has expanded municipal green spaces in the last two years by 4.25% including the Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve to a total of 1844 acres, or 13.5% of Morin-Heights' total territory. The objective is to preserve a network of trails and protect the natural environment. A series of acquisitions, land donations, and major donations of funds for the purpose of land acquisition, have made the expansion possible.

Jane Hope, Founder of Lac Echo Buyers Club, and Mathieu Filion, Co-owner of Invesco Habitation, brought the Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve project to Morin Heights Mayor, Tim Watchhorn in early 2018. "It sounds like a joke: A politician, a developer, and a conservationist meet in a bar," says Hope. "But we all had serious reasons for wanting to make the project work."

Hope and Filion had separately bid on a major land acquisition from *Mont Saint-Sauveur Inc.* The 330 acres included a network of streams and wetlands of critical interest to the Lac Echo Buyers Club to preserve water quality in the watershed. The land was also strategically adjacent to Filion's Allen Falls development that he hoped to expand. "We were both very

determined. It became clear that the way for everyone to win was to work together,” says Filion. The solution was to divide the property. An adjacent property already owned by Invesco was also divided. The result is 215 acres toward the river reserved for conservation, and 219 acres along Route 329 allocated to low density development.

“We all wanted a lot of green,” says Morin Heights Mayor, Tim Watchorn. “Morin Heights is home to 150 km of trails, the Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve is key in a series of connected green spaces that allow the trails and the revenue they bring to the municipality, to be preserved for generations to come.” Those responsible for environment, urbanism and sports and leisure at the municipality became key players in the project.

Both the Allen Falls development and the Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve are protected by eco-servitudes that dictate permitted and prohibited activities on the trails, and no activity of any kind, including hunting and fishing, off trail. An application to further protect the conservation area with Quebec provincial *Reserve Naturelle en milieu Privee* status was a prerequisite of the acquisition.

To the north, the Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve will connect to Basler Park: a 125 acres municipal park combining 31 acres purchased by the municipality in 2007; 16.5 acres donated by the Lackman family; 2 acres donated by Mr. Daniel Mathieu; and 75 acres acquired through the Park tax and purchase from the Invesco Allen Falls project.

To the south, the long-term plan is to connect to 311 acres donated by the Sheldon family to protect the Viking ski trail network.

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The Lac Echo Buyers Club was formed in early 2018 by Jane Hope, resident of Lac Echo (*lacecho.com*), to respond to citizen concern for water quality in the Ruisseau Jackson watershed. The Ruisseau Jackson originates at Lac Anne, feeds Lac Dainava and Lac Echo, before joining La Riviere a Simon in the village of Morin Heights. The watershed includes extensive wetlands that filter toxins and sediment from the water and are home to a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna according to a 2018 *EnviroSolutions* study.

Hope, with other members of the Lake Echo Buyers Club, is also a member of *Ruisseau Jackson Aire Naturelle Protegee* ([ruisseaujackson.org](http://ruisseaujackson.org)), a grassroots movement formed to protect the watershed. Founded in 2014 by Morin-Heights resident, Mathieu Regnier, RJANP conducts regular water testing, and monitors residential and commercial adherence to environmental protection laws, maintains a working relationship with municipal, regional and provincial authorities to review remediation options. RJANP actively encourages private and public conservation and organizes environmental sensitization activities for the community in accordance to its mission of protecting the natural environment around the Ruisseau Jackson watershed.

Mathieu Filion, Co-owner of Invesco Habitation, is a founding member of RJANP, and a major sponsor of the Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve. Invesco is a residential development company operating in Morin Heights and responsible for the *Allen Falls* development. The development implements stringent the environmental practices. In collaboration with the municipality, Invesco collaborated with the municipality to add 60 acres to Basler Park. The Allen Falls development imposes after purchase environmental rules for residents, all in an effort to preserve the forests and waterways in their natural state.

“Morin Heights is united by love for nature. The Ruisseau Jackson Nature Reserve is the result of generous gifts of time, skill, and funds dedicated to that shared purpose,” says Hope.

#### **About Morin Heights**

[www.morinheights.com](http://www.morinheights.com)

#### **About Invesco**

[www.invescohabitation.ca](http://www.invescohabitation.ca)

#### **About Ruisseau Jackson Aire Naturelle Protegee**

[www.ruisseaujackson.org](http://www.ruisseaujackson.org)

#### **About Echo Foundation**

[www.fondationecho.ca](http://www.fondationecho.ca)

#### **About Fondation de la faune du Québec**

[www.fondationdelafaune.qc.ca](http://www.fondationdelafaune.qc.ca)

**About Nature Canada Conservancy**

[www.natureconservancy.ca](http://www.natureconservancy.ca)