

COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE  
NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

**No.** 2024-i166

**To** Board of Directors

**For:** INFORMATION

**Date** 2024-04-18

### Subject/Title

Acquisitions and Partnerships, Gatineau Park and Ecological Corridors

### Summary

- To fulfil Gatineau Park's conservation mandate, the NCC uses a variety of methods to maintain the biodiversity and health of the park's ecosystems.
- The methods include the acquisition of private properties and the partnership program for protecting the ecological corridors, which are effective initiatives.
- Since 2008, the area of private lands within Gatineau Park's boundaries has decreased from 627.22 hectares to 357.96 hectares, a decrease of over 40% in the proportion of private properties in the park.
- The 63 properties acquired have a combined area of 269.26 hectares.
- Since its launch in 2021, four (4) properties have been protected in the ecological corridors by partners, with NCC support.
- In total, these properties have a combined area of 104 hectares.

### Risk Summary

- Real estate market volatility
- Reliance on external partners (partnerships for protecting ecological corridors)
- Depletion or discontinuation of the Green Fund

### Recommendation

N/A

Submitted by:

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Anne Ménard, Vice-President of the Capital Stewardship Branch

## 1. Strategic Priorities

The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067

- Strategic directions
  - In Gatineau Park and the Greenbelt, the NCC will prioritize acquiring ecologically sensitive lands to increase protection of vulnerable ecosystems essential to the Capital. There are various ways to achieve this objective, including land-use planning, land purchases, or establishing conservation easements.
- Milestone Project 7
  - Secured ecological corridors and protected natural environments.

Gatineau Park Master Plan

Gatineau Park was created through the gradual acquisition of properties within its boundaries. Some of the land is still privately owned and remains under municipal jurisdiction. The NCC's long-term objective is to acquire those properties when opportunities arise. In the meantime, it is essential to work with the RCMs, municipalities, and property owners to ensure that development of those properties respects, to the greatest extent possible, the natural environment where they are located.

- Goals and strategic directions
  - Conserve nature
  - Provide a recreational and cultural experience in nature
  - Promote equitable and sustainable access
  - Encourage engagement and collaboration
- Strategic projects
  - Land acquisition strategy
  - Protection of ecological corridors

## 2. Authority

Acquisition of private properties in Gatineau Park

- On September 8, 2008, the National Capital Commission (NCC) received Governor-in-Council approval to acquire properties in Gatineau Park after finalizing an acquisition strategy.

Agreements for protecting properties in the ecological corridors

- Initial approval from the Executive Management Committee in 2021 (2021-i116);
- Update by the Executive Management Committee in 2022 (2022-i154);
- Agreements finalized based on the Delegation of Financial Authorities.

### 3. Background

#### Acquisition of private properties in Gatineau Park

- As confirmed in the 2021 Gatineau Park Master Plan, the NCC's land acquisition strategy is to continue acquiring private properties within Gatineau Park's territory, while factoring in budget allocations and, as much as possible, by mutual agreement. The NCC will prioritize land that supports the park's conservation mission, ecologically and strategically.
- The Executive Management Committee (EMC) approved the revised acquisition strategy in October 2015. A review of the acquisition strategy led to streamlining of the acquisition criteria and updating of the order of priority of private properties, simultaneously clarifying and simplifying the decision-making process.
- The land acquisition strategy is based on ecological characteristics, real estate development risk, and price charged compared with fair market value as a way of prioritizing the acquisitions in three categories.
- Private lands within Gatineau Park's boundaries in 2008 totalled 627.22 hectares, or about 1.7% of the Park's total area.
- Currently, private lands within Gatineau Park's boundaries total 357.96 hectares, about 1% of the Park's total area.
- From January 2008 to January 2024, a total of 269.26 hectares of private lands within Gatineau Park's boundaries was acquired by the NCC, including 63 properties, reducing the amount of private properties within the Park by 40%.
- In 2023, three properties in the Park had already been purchased. A total of 4.68 hectares was acquired in 2023.
- The acquisition of 0 Notch Road was also completed on March 25, 2024. The property is adjacent to the Park's boundaries, partially on lands designated as an Ecological Land Mass (ELM), in the Chelsea Creek ecological corridor. The central portion of the land is a former golf course, now fallow land.
- The combined acquired properties total 266 hectares on which, to date, we have identified 13 species at risk and nine critical habitats, as designated by Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- The properties include meadows, mature forests, wetlands, and aquatic environments.
- These ecosystems support essential services such as air quality control, water filtration, and climate regulation.
- Once the properties are acquired, they are renaturalized. Properties in good condition are leased until they reach the end of their useful life, after which they are demolished and the land is renaturalized.
- As such, acquiring private lands in Gatineau Park increases the economic value of the NCC's green spaces and contributes to Canada's efforts in achieving the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework objectives.

#### Agreements for protecting properties in the ecological corridors

- The ecological corridors adjacent to Gatineau Park identified in 2012 were formalized in the Gatineau Park Master Plan, which was approved on January 21, 2021, by the

NCC Board of Directors. They were designated as ELMs, making them lands that the NCC wants to protect.

- In 2021, a partnership program for covering some of the administrative costs not covered by nature conservation organizations was presented to regional stakeholders. An application process and an internal selection committee were established for assessing grant applications.
- In 2022, the selection committee supported the Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment (ACRE) proposal to protect Hundred Acre Wood, located in the Park's northeast corridor. Through the NCC's financial contribution, the 40.46-hectare property is now protected.
- That same year, the committee also supported ACRE's proposal to protect Jolicoeur-McMartin Forest, a 28.55-hectare property located in the Larrimac corridor.
- In 2023, the selection committee supported the Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) proposal to protect the 17.97-hectare Devcore Property, located in the Breckenridge Creek corridor.
- The committee also supported ACRE's proposal in 2023 to protect the 17.04-hectare Larrimac Forest, located in the Larrimac corridor.

#### **4. Options Analysis**

N/A

#### **5. Financial Details**

The funding used to acquire private properties in Gatineau Park and enter into agreements to protect properties in the ecological corridors comes from the Green Fund, a five-year Government of Canada funding program announced in 2021.

#### **6. Opportunities and Expected Results**

Conserving ecological integrity is a cornerstone of Gatineau Park management. The park is home to a rich array of wildlife and plants and provides the National Capital Region with irreplaceable ecological services. The main expected result of acquiring private properties within Gatineau Park's boundaries and protecting ecological connectivity is the conservation of park's health and biodiversity.

#### **7. Alignment with Government and NCC Policies**

The following findings were obtained through Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus):

- Potentially unintended and unequal impacts may occur for various groups of people, on various scales and at different times during the existing processes;

- For example, the NCC's acquisition of private properties could be viewed negatively by First Nations communities with land claims if a positive and collaborative relationship is not established;
- The strategy's credibility could be adversely affected if it appeared that some groups of people were receiving less compensation than others for properties of similar values;
- Where public access is planned on newly acquired or protected lands in an ecological corridor, measures should be taken to ensure equitable access in the long term;
- Awarding grants under the partnership program to protect ecological corridors is another stage wherein potential biases need to be mitigated or eliminated.

The following mitigation measures were proposed and considered in the proposal:

- The NCC and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg (KZA) are working together on matters pertaining to the development of Gatineau Park and protection of biodiversity. Discussions between the NCC and the KZA are underway to enter into an agreement and formalize the collaborative processes.
- An independent assessment of fair market value is systematically performed before proceeding with any Gatineau Park acquisitions and is used as a basis for negotiations;
- Initiatives are underway to reduce accessibility inequities in Gatineau Park. Examples include increasing public transit possibilities and reviewing pricing policies.
- A grid containing multiple criteria is filled out by the members of the assessment committee to award grants to applicants of the protection of ecological corridors partnership program. The approval documents are retained.

The initiatives align with the objectives of Canada's Sustainable Development Strategy, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and Canada's Climate Actions for a Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy.

## 8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

| <b>Risk</b>                                     | <b>Likelihood</b> | <b>Impact</b> | <b>Planned response</b>   |
|---|-------------------|---------------|---|
| Real estate market volatility                   | Moderate          | Moderate      | Acquisitions and partnership agreements carried out in a way that adjusts to the market. In general, more transactions and agreements are made when market conditions are favourable. |
| Reliance on external partners (partnerships for | Moderate          | Moderate      | A continual, concerted effort with partners to stay abreast of the challenges faced and to provide support when possible.   |

|  |          |      |  |
|--|----------|------|--|
| protecting ecological corridors)               |          |      |  |
| Depletion or discontinuation of the Green Fund | Moderate | High | Ongoing cooperation with the Minister's office to stay abreast of government directions. |

## 9. Public Engagement and Communication

Media lines are prepared for answering questions from the public or from journalists about acquisitions and partnerships.

## 10. Next Steps

- The Real Estate Transactions team is engaged in discussions with a number of property owners for other properties of interest located within Gatineau Park's boundaries.
- There are still nearly 350 private properties in the park, 43 with an area larger than one hectare.
- The Land Management team is engaged in discussions with external partners to contribute to new conservation projects in the ecological corridors.

## 11. List of Appendices

- Appendix A: Acquisitions Map for Gatineau Park (January 2008 to January 2024)
- Appendix B: Map of Lands with an Agreement under the Partnership Program for Protecting the Ecological Corridors around Gatineau Park (2022–2023)

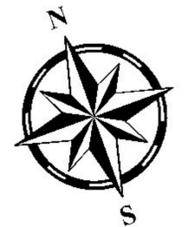
## 12. Authors of the Submission

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**GATINEAU PARK ACQUISITIONS  
SINCE 2008-01-01**

**ACQUISITIONS DANS LE PARC  
DE LA GATINEAU DEPUIS 2008-01-01**

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2008  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2009  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2010  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2011  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2012  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2013  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2014  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2015  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2016  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2017  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2018  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2019  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2022  |
|  | ACQUISITIONS 2023  |
|  | OWNED OR MANAGED BY THE NCC<br>GESTION OU PROPRIÉTÉ DE LA CCN                              |
|  | PROVINCIAL LANDS (1973 AGREEMENT - QUEBEC)<br>TERRAINS PROVINCIAUX (ENTENTE 1973 - QUÉBEC) |
|  | OTHER PUBLIC LANDS<br>AUTRES TERRAINS PUBLICS  |
|  | GATINEAU PARK BOUNDARY - 2021<br>LIMITES DU PARC DE LA GATINEAU - 2021                     |
|  | MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES<br>LIMITES MUNICIPALES  |

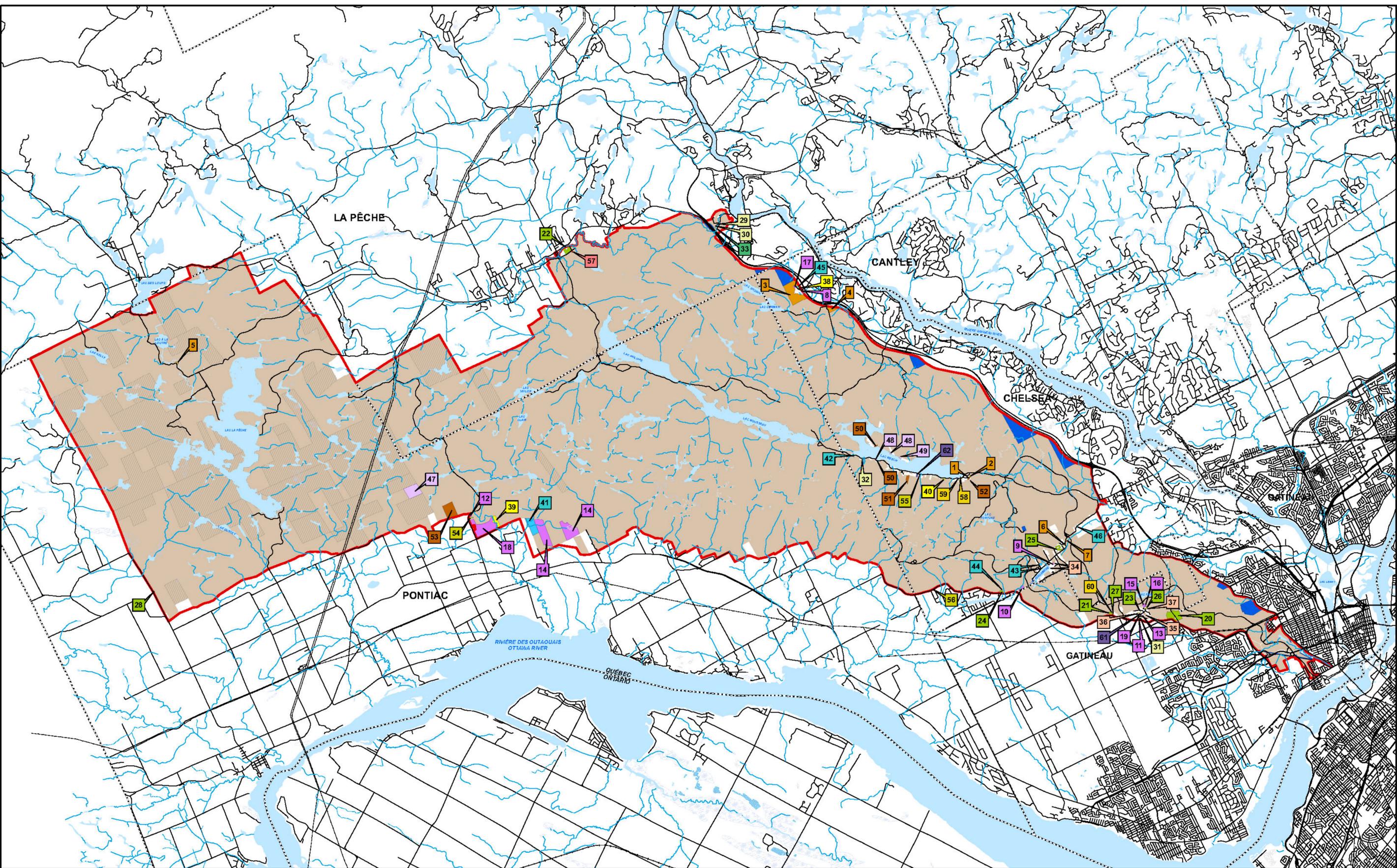


1 hectare = 2.4710 acres



SCALE / ÉCHELLE: 1:60,000  
2024-01-24

PRODUCED BY: / PRODUIT PAR:  
GEOMATICS SERVICES / SERVICES GÉOMATIQUES



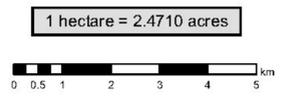
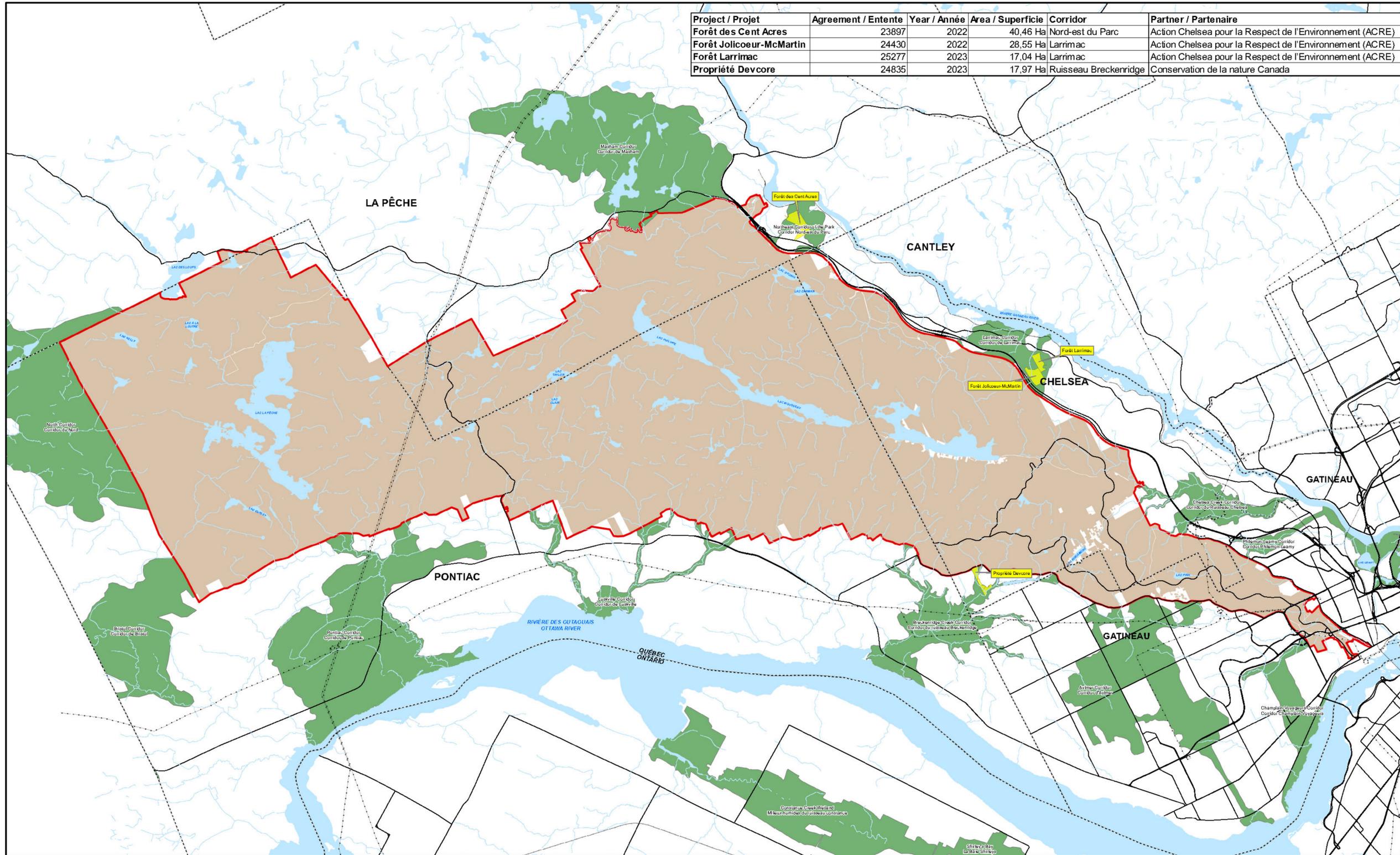
| Project / Projet         | Agreement / Entente | Year / Année | Area / Superficie | Corridor              | Partner / Partenaire                                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Forêt des Cent Acres     | 23897               | 2022         | 40,46 Ha          | Nord-est du Parc      | Action Chelsea pour la Respect de l'Environnement (ACRE) |
| Forêt Jolicoeur-McMartin | 24430               | 2022         | 28,55 Ha          | Larrimac              | Action Chelsea pour la Respect de l'Environnement (ACRE) |
| Forêt Larrimac           | 25277               | 2023         | 17,04 Ha          | Larrimac              | Action Chelsea pour la Respect de l'Environnement (ACRE) |
| Propriété Devcore        | 24835               | 2023         | 17,97 Ha          | Ruisseau Breckenridge | Conservation de la nature Canada                         |



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Partnership program for the protection  
of ecological corridors  
2022-2023

Programme de partenariat pour la  
protection des corridors écologiques  
2022-2023



SCALE / ÉCHELLE: 1:60 000

2024-01-24

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