

Ecological Gifts Program

Donor Profile

Photo: Jean-Philip Rousseau

A Forest Saved, a Future Secured in Québec's Lanaudière Region

“To protect it in perpetuity, so it can never be developed - that was my dream,” says Linda Reven as she hikes through a forest she once owned in Québec's Lanaudière region, surrounded by 223 hectares of land she lovingly nurtured. Though she no longer owns the land, her commitment to its well-being endures. **“I made the decision to donate because I needed a lot of help to allow the land to heal.”**

Before Linda acquired the forest, it had been clearcut. She replanted the land, but she recognized that restoring it would require more than one person's efforts. That's when she reached out to the Lanaudière Ecosystems Conservation Trust, an organization dedicated to preserving vital natural spaces. **“I just sent a message through their website, saying 'I own property - I don't know if you'd be interested in it.' I got an immediate answer.”**



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The Ecological Gifts Program helps landowners protect ecologically sensitive areas while offering financial benefits, subject to three requirements:

1. The land must be certified as ecologically sensitive;
2. The fair market value of the ecological gift must be determined; and
3. The gift must be donated to a qualified recipient (such as a land trust, or a municipal, provincial or federal government) that will ensure that the land's biodiversity and environmental heritage are conserved in perpetuity.



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Linda recalls her first interaction with the organization that would soon receive her land. **“They came as a team, three biologists. We had an all-day hike. It was very interesting to hear their assessment. I didn’t know a lot about what species were present and endangered.”**

“It’s definitely a gift from heaven”, says Marie-Pierre Thibeault, General Manager of the Trust. **“These are incredible areas, in the heart of the Black River Valley. Her land fits perfectly into an entire corridor that must be protected.”** This regional conservation effort is gradually weaving together a network of public and private protected areas.

Linda’s donation sends a powerful message: restoring a clear-cut forest is possible with the right support.

The property is among the 10 largest fee simple donations in Quebec (by area) - where full ownership of the land is transferred without any conditions or retained rights. Yet she remains humble about her choice. **“It’s not entirely a selfless act because the Government of Canada’s tax rebate is so generous, and the value of the land has gone up so much. It’s a huge incentive.”**

As of January 2025, the Lanaudière Ecosystems Conservation Trust had received nine ecological gifts in a decade, totalling 572 hectares (including Linda Reven’s 223 hectares). Those gifts amount to 80% of all the protected land owned by the Trust.

Linda is proof that one person can make a lasting difference to conservation while maintaining a connection to the land.

Now she can rest easy, knowing that she has helped protect an important ecosystem while inspiring others to consider the same path. **“There are probably landowners who didn’t develop their land because they appreciate it the way it is”**, she says. **“They might not know what’s going to happen to it afterwards. But there’s a way to protect it, because you never know what the next landowner will do with it.”**

**Do you own land that contains natural habitat, such as a forest, prairie, wetland or shoreline?
Would you like to see it protected for future generations?**

Through the Government of Canada’s Ecological Gifts Program, landowners can donate their land, or a partial interest such as a conservation easement agreement, to an eligible recipient organization that will care for it forever, such as a land trust, conservation organization, or government. In addition to the peace of mind that the land will be forever protected, donors can receive significant income tax benefits including elimination of any tax on the capital gain.

For more information, visit the Ecological Gifts Program website at:
www.canada.ca/ecological-gifts

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Cat. No.: En14-563/7-2025E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-660-79149-4

His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the
Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, 2026

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