

St. Stephen's Forest Management Plan



Prepared for
Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment (ACRE)

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1. Table of Contents

- 1 HIGHLIGHTS..... 4**
- 2 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION 5**
 - 2.1 LOCATION AND SIZE OF THE PROPERTY 5
 - 2.2 ROLE OF THE PROPERTY IN THE ORGANISATION'S CONSERVATION STRATEGY 5
 - 2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF THE OWNER, POTENTIAL MANAGERS AND PARTNERS 6
 - 2.4 HISTORY OF PROPERTY USE 7
 - 2.4.1 *Past and present uses* 7
 - 2.4.2 *Current state of conservation*..... 7
 - 2.5 PUBLIC ACCESS 7
 - 2.6 DESCRIPTION AND CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE PROPERTY 8
 - 2.7 ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION 9
 - 2.7.1 *Geology*..... 9
 - 2.7.2 *Hydrology*..... 9
 - 2.7.3 *Soil type* 12
 - 2.7.4 *Climate*..... 12
 - 2.7.5 *Flora*..... 12
 - 2.7.6 *Fauna*..... 14
 - 2.7.7 *Species at risk* 14
 - 2.7.8 *Special characteristics* 15
- 3 LEGAL INFORMATION 16**
 - 3.1 CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, EASEMENTS EXISTING ON THE PROPERTY 16
 - 3.2 SPECIAL STATUS OR DESIGNATION 17
 - 3.3 MUNICIPAL ZONING AND LAND USE 17
 - 3.4 PROPERTY TAX INFORMATION 17
 - 3.5 INSURANCE 17
- 4 MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION STRATEGY 18**
 - 4.1 GENERAL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT TARGETS 18
 - 4.2 THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY 18
 - 4.2.1 *Tree mortality due to disease and pathogens* 18
 - 4.2.2 *Forest degradation due to climate change* 19
 - 4.2.3 *Plant harvesting* 19

4.2.4	<i>Encroachment</i>	19
4.2.5	<i>Invasive alien plant species</i>	19
4.2.6	<i>Impact of canids on fauna and flora</i>	20
4.3	CONSERVATION STRATEGIES AND TARGETS	20
4.4	ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF THE PROPERTY AND TARGETS	21
4.5	ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE	22
5	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS	24
5.1	MANAGEMENT FUND (ENDOWMENT OR STEWARDSHIP) AND BUDGET	24
5.2	AUTHORISED ACTIVITIES	24
5.2.1	<i>Public access</i>	24
5.2.2	<i>Signage</i>	24
5.2.3	<i>Scientific activities</i>	25
5.2.4	<i>Interpretation, education and recreation activities</i>	25
5.2.5	<i>Infrastructure</i>	25
5.2.6	<i>Recovery of species at risk</i>	25
5.2.7	<i>Pest management</i>	25
5.2.8	<i>Thinning</i>	26
5.2.10	<i>Monitoring, maintenance and management activities</i>	26
5.3	PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES	26
5.4	ECOLOGICAL MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE	28
5.5	COMMUNICATIONS	28
5.5.1	<i>Marking and identification of property boundaries</i>	28
5.5.2	<i>Volunteering opportunities</i>	28
5.5.3	<i>Relations with neighbours</i>	28
6	REFERENCES	30
7	APPENDICES	32

1 Highlights

Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment (ACRE) is a non-profit conservation organization mandated to acquire and preserve land of ecological importance in the municipality of Chelsea and other municipalities located next to Gatineau Park. In November 2025, ACRE and St. Stephen's Parish in Chelsea signed two conservation easements on lot #6 666 277 owned by the parish: one perpetual and one for a term of 25 years (to date until November 2050). ACRE also purchased the adjacent lot # 6 666 276, which will serve as the dominant tenement. All of these lands, with a total area of 70.9 acres, are hereinafter referred to as "St. Stephen's Forest." This is the twelfth property conserved by ACRE and the first to be protected by conservation easements.

The site is a rich and well-preserved forested hill in the heart of the village of Chelsea. It is an area under pressure from urban development due to its proximity to the city of Gatineau. Despite this, the woodland remains relatively unfragmented and represents a biodiversity corridor with the region's natural environments. The woodlands that make up the site are part of the bioclimatic domain of the sugar maple-hickory forest and are dominated by sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and red oak (*Quercus rubra*). The site contains wetlands and watercourses and is home to several plant species at risk. A total of eight plant species at risk have been identified on the site. The eastern wood-pigeon, a species of bird of concern in Canada, as well as several bat species at risk, have also been detected in the forest.

The St. Stephen Forest Management Plan aims to provide general guidance for the management and stewardship of the property. Among other things, it aims to determine and specify, for the entire property: 1) the conservation value and conservation targets of the property, 2) permitted and prohibited activities, taking into account its conservation values, 3) the main threats, 4) management and conservation objectives and strategies, and 5) an action plan and timetable for achieving the objectives and reducing the risks or threats to the property's conservation values.

The main threats to biodiversity in St. Stephen's Forest identified in this management plan are: 1) significant tree decline due to various diseases, pathogens and insect pests, 2) damage to the forest caused by the increased frequency of intense storms due to climate change, 3) harvesting of plants vulnerable to harvesting, 4) encroachment, 5) habitat degradation by invasive exotic plants, particularly buckthorn, and 6) possible disturbance of wildlife by canids.

Numerous conservation actions are proposed in the short term (by 2031) and medium term (by 2036) to reduce the impact of the identified threats. The main objectives will be to: 1) maintain biodiversity on the property, 2) assess tree health, 3) maintain and increase the presence of at-risk

wildlife and plant species on the property, and 4) preserve the area and condition of wetlands and water bodies on the property. In general, ACRE is committed to applying conservation standards and best practices in accordance with the [Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices](#) (2019), which provide technical and ethical guidelines for responsible management of natural environments.

Interested parties may obtain, as needed and from ACRE managers, documentation related to the deed of purchase of the land and easements, the organization's policies, insurance, or ecological characterization. The policies are also published [on the ACRE website](#).

2 Property description

2.1 Location and size of the property

The two real conservation easements are located on lot # 6 666 277 of the Quebec cadastre in the municipality of Chelsea, in the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais. The 25-year easement covers an area of 10.9 acres (see parcel 1 in Appendix 1) and the perpetual easement covers an area of 59.1 acres (see parcel 2 in Appendix 1). ACRE also purchased lot # 6 666 276 of the Quebec cadastre, which is the dominant estate for both easements (see this lot in Appendix 1). The land is located at the intersection of Highway A-5 and Old Chelsea Road and less than 300 metres east of the edge of Gatineau Park. It has access to Preston Road to the north and is bordered by private land to the north, west and east, as well as St. Stephen's Church and a cemetery to the south. The land constitutes a large part of a wooded corridor between Gatineau Park and the Gatineau River.

2.2 Role of the property in the organization's conservation strategy

As a conservation organization, ACRE is mandated to acquire, through donations, purchases, conservation easements, and the relinquishment of other legal interests in land and water, land of ecological importance in the municipality of Chelsea and other municipalities around Gatineau Park, particularly in areas identified as ecological corridors by the National Capital Commission. Although St. Stephen's Forest was not identified as being located in an ecological corridor in [the study by Del Degan and Massé \(2012\)](#), a more recent independent study conducted by Rayfield and Firkowski (2024), which systematically identified ecological movement corridors between protected areas, recognized this land as part of a potential corridor enhancing connectivity between Gatineau Park and the Gatineau River. ACRE's strategic plan is available [on the website](#).

2.3 Identification of owner, potential managers and partners

ACRE is a non-profit corporation legally incorporated on 12 April 2000 under the Corporations Act of Québec (RLRQ, C.C-38) and registered in the Québec enterprise register under number 1149266505. ACRE's head office is located at 64 Juniper Road in Chelsea, Québec, JGB1T3.

ACRE will manage the forest in collaboration with two committees: a governance committee, composed of representatives from ACRE and the parish, and a stewardship committee, composed of 6 to 8 local volunteers. The latter committee is an ACRE committee, formed on the basis of a call for interested individuals. Some individuals expressed interest in joining this committee during the community funding phase. The committee represents different skills and neighbourhoods around the site. The initial terms of its members are two years. The committee is responsible for the following activities:

- Based on ACRE's land management plan and this document, ensure its implementation, while involving the community.
- Carry out stewardship activities on the land. Activities on the land must be consistent with the plan and its initial objective as described here.
- Advising the ACRE Board of Directors on issues related to community priorities and concerns, as well as conditions affecting the land.
- Maintain communication with the community.
- Address issues and suggestions raised by community members, including resolving complaints.
- Liaise regularly with the ACRE Board of Directors on all matters relating to the property.
- Liaise, as necessary, with partners such as the Municipality of Chelsea, Sentiers Chelsea Trails, and neighbouring property owners.
- Liaise with associations and/or organisations with similar views.

The management of St. Stephen's Forest also benefits from the expertise of [the Réseau de milieux naturels](#) (RMN), an organization that has been bringing together the majority of private land conservation stakeholders in Quebec for 27 years. The RMN is a non-profit organization that promotes the conservation of natural environments for the benefit of the community. The members of this network protect more than 81,836 hectares across Quebec and bring together hundreds of conservation experts. ACRE can access the RMN's resources online at the following address by creating a member account.

Another ACRE partner in forest management is Sentiers Chelsea Trails (SCT), which supports the parish in maintaining the trails and has an agreement with the parish and the municipality. Any new decisions regarding the trails must comply with the terms of this agreement. The forest trails are shown on [the SCT map](#) (see Chelsea West).

2.4 History of property use

2.4.1 Past and present uses

The land was acquired by St. Stephen's Parish when it was established in 1845.

Lot 6 666 276 is part of lots 5 695 740 and 2 635 632, Quebec Cadastre. Lot 6 666 277 is also part of lots 5 695 740 and 2 635 632, Quebec Cadastre. Lot 5 695 740 is a subdivided part of lot 2 635 772, Quebec Cadastre. Lot 2,635,632 was formerly known as part of lot 13A, range 9, Township of Hull. Lot 5,695,740 was formerly known as part of lot 13B, range 9, Township of Hull.

The forest stands are between 50 and over 90 years old, depending on the area, although some areas have younger plant units with a lot of young regrowth. There appear to be no traces of former habitation or agricultural farming (e.g., rock fences or young, homogeneous forests).

The property is currently used solely for hiking on the trails. Bicycles are prohibited in the forest, and appropriate signage is posted at the entrance to Preston Road.

2.4.2 Current state of conservation

The overall health of the ecosystems found in St. Stephen's Forest is considered acceptable, due to the rich and well-preserved woodland in a peri-urban area, but also due to the presence of several threats identified in section 4.2, notably the prevalence of several exotic diseases affecting several tree species, as well as climate change.

2.5 Public use

St. Stephen's Forest has been frequented for several decades by local residents, mainly for low-impact recreational activities such as hiking and dog walking. When ACRE purchased lot # 6 666 276 and signed the conservation easements, it was understood that these uses would continue. The current trail network will be maintained and connected to adjacent lands as part of a larger community trail network.

Currently, based on two camera trap surveys in 2024, the number of users of the property is estimated at approximately 15 people per day, including 5 walking their dogs.

It is recognised that the forest cannot accommodate a large number of users at one time. There are no support facilities for recreational activities, such as parking and toilets, and there will not be any in the future. There will be no commercial use.

2.6 Description and condition of infrastructure on the property

For the purposes of this plan, infrastructure refers to all non-transportable, man-made structures or objects, including bridges or culverts, trails or paths, buildings, fences, observation platforms, barns or stables, sheds, etc. It does not include transportable objects such as picnic tables, benches, canoes, waste, etc.

There are no buildings on the land. The only confirmed infrastructure is walking trails. [The Chelsea Trails map](#) (Chelsea Owest), available on the organization's website, was used and georeferenced in ArcGIS software by Groupe Synergys to calculate the length of the trails on the SERVING LAND and its parcels (see Table 1).

While in 2025 there were no trail identification signs in the forest, there are trail identification signs on Old Chelsea Road, outside the site, and there are signs prohibiting the use of bicycles, requesting that dog waste be picked up, and concerning Chelsea Trails, as well as a sign saying "Respect nature and private property" at the entrance to the forest on Preston Road and a sign asking people to pick up after their dogs at the entrance to the forest behind the church.

Finally, overhead power lines on poles are located at the southern edge of the church property, along Old Chelsea Road. There are no power lines inside the forest.

Table 1: Length of trails in the forest (Source: Synergys Group, 2025)

Trail (# or name)	Usage	Width (m)	Length (m)	Substrate	Locations	# photo
Chelsea Community Trail	Walk	N/A	198	Natural surface	Parcel 1 (see Appendix 1)	N/A
Chelsea Community Trail	Walk	N/A	1268	Natural surface	Parcel 2 (see Appendix 1)	N/A
Total			1466			



2.7 Ecological information

2.7.1 Geology

St. Stephen's Forest is part of the Grenville Geological Province, a region characterized by sedimentary rocks such as marble, calc-silicate rocks, dolomite, schist and quartzite. The underlying Canadian Shield is composed mainly of granite and some metamorphosed igneous rocks. The oldest bedrock in the municipality of Chelsea consists of Precambrian rock (over 570 million years old), composed of igneous and metamorphic rocks, on which other geological units were deposited.

Topographic map 031G12-WAKEFIELD (RNC, 2021) shows that the study site is characterized by a hill with plateaus. The average elevation is 140 m at the bottom of the slope, 160 m in the middle of the slope, and 180 m in the centre of the site. The slope of the hill, before reaching its plateau, is approximately 35%.

2.7.2 Hydrology

The characterisation of the hydrographic network revealed the presence of three (3) stream beds that are considered natural (watercourses) due to the presence of a defined substrate and a sinuous and natural course (see Appendix 2 and Table 2). The flow of the three watercourses is considered intermittent. During the inventories carried out on 22 and 23 June 2021 by WSP, no fish were observed in the three watercourses present on the study site (WSP, 2021). Furthermore, the potential for finding fish in these watercourses is nil due to the very shallow depth of the water, which is even absent in some places, and the type of substrate, which was mainly organic matter.

Table 2: Stream beds identified at the study site (Source: WSP, 2021)

Code	Type	Average width (m)		Average depth (m)	Substrate (substrates are listed in descending order of importance)	Bank slope (%) / Slope height (m)	Fish habitat (potential)
		Full-flow width	LHE				
CE01	Intermittent	1	2	1	Organic matter, sand, stones	< 30% / < 1 m	Zero potential
CE01-1	Intermittent	1	3	0	Organic matter, sand, pebbles	< 30% / < 1 m	Zero potential
CE02	Intermittent	1	2	1	Organic matter, sand, stones, pebbles	< 30% / < 1 m	Zero potential
CE03	Intermittent	1	1.5	1	Organic matter, stone, gravel, pebbles and sand	< 30% / < 1 m	Zero potential
CE03-1	Intermittent	1	3	0	Organic matter, stones and sand	< 30% / < 1 m	Zero potential

Five (5) wetlands represented by four (4) types of plant communities dominated by hydrophytic species characteristic of wetlands were observed within the study site (see Appendix 2 and Table 3). The four (4) types of communities are: 1) Shrubby swamp with buckthorn, 2) Shrubby swamp with thuja, 3) Wooded bog, and 4) Vernal pool (see map in Appendix 2 and Table 3). The wooded bog has a high ecological value (74%) according to WSP (2021). Wetlands cover 2% of the study site in terms of area.

Table 3: Characteristics of wetlands in the forest (Source: Groupe Synergys, 2025, WSP, 2021)

Code	Type	Area		Direct hydro link	CE coastline	Presence of EMVS	Presence of EEE	Ecological value ^c (%)	Dominant species		
		(ha)	(%) ^A						Trees	Shrubs	Herbaceous plants
MH01	Shrubby marsh with buckthorn	0.03	< 1	Yes	No	No	Yes	29.00 (Low)	<i>Larix decidua</i> , <i>Populus tremuloides</i> , <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	<i>Frangula alnus</i> , <i>Spiraea alba</i> , <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> , <i>Carex stricta</i>
MH02	Shrubby swamp with thuja	0.08	< 1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	32.50 (Low)	<i>Larix decidua</i> , <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	<i>Equisetum variegatum</i> subsp. <i>variegatum</i> , <i>Equisetum hyemale</i> , <i>Trichophorum alpinum</i>
MH03	Wooded bog	0.34	1	No	No	Yes ¹	Yes	74.00 (High)	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i> , <i>Betula alleghaniensis</i> , <i>Betula papyrifera</i>	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	<i>Cystopteris bulbifera</i> , <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>
MH04	Vernal pool	0.04	< 1	Yes	Yes	No	No	45.00 (Average)	None	None	None
MH05	Vernal mare	0.03	< 1	Yes	Yes	No	No	45.00 (Average)	None	None	None
Wet subtotal		0.52	2								
Total for site		3.76	100								

^A As a relative percentage of the total area of the study site

^B 1 = Species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable (QC), 2 = Vulnerable to harvesting (QC), 3 = Vulnerable species (QC), 4 = Threatened species (QC), 5 = Species of concern (CAN), 6 = Threatened species (CAN), 7 = Endangered species (CAN)

^C Very low: <20%; Low: 21-40%; Medium: 41-60%; High: 61-85%; Very high: >86%

2.7.3 Soil type

According to the SIGÉOM morphosedimentological zone map, the surface deposits present on the site are mainly thin and discontinuous till deposits (MERN, 2021). Soil map 31G12-101 (IRDA, 2009) defines the soils of the study site as Gatineau loam sandy till (Gatineau sandy loam). The soil study of the counties of Gatineau and Pontiac (Lajoie, 1962) provides the same results as the IRDA. This information was confirmed during field visits conducted in June 2021 by WSP (WSP, 2021).

2.7.4 Climate

St. Stephen's Forest is part of the Southern Laurentian Natural Province, which has the mildest climate in Quebec. It is estimated to have 165-199 days of plant growth and an average annual temperature ranging from -0.2 to 4.2 degrees.

2.7.5 Flora

The woodlands that make up the site are part of the bioclimatic domain of the sugar maple-hickory forest. The ecological study conducted by WSP in 2021 indicates that the St. Stephen's Forest is composed of four terrestrial plant communities (GT01 to GT04) and four wetland plant communities represented by five wetlands (MH01 to MH05) (see Appendix 2 and Table 4). The main characteristics of the plant communities are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Main characteristics of terrestrial plant communities (Source: Hroupe Synergis, 2025, WSP, 2021)

Code	Type	Area		Presence of EMVSB	Maturity	Presence of EEE	Ecological value ^C (%)	Dominant species		
		(ha)	(%) ^A					Trees	Shrubs	Herbaceous plants
GT01	Hardwoods tolerant to conifers	2.04	6	Yes ²	Mature	Yes	54 (Average)	Acer saccharum, Quercus rubra, Thuja occidentalis	Acer saccharum, Ostrya virginiana, Thuja occidentalis	Aralia nudicaulis, Trillium grandiflorum, Maianthemum racemosum subsp. racemosum, Maianthemum canadense subsp. canadense, Arisaema triphyllum subsp. pusillum, Athyrium filix-femina, Cystopteris bulbifera, Dryopteris carthusiana, Dryopteris intermedia, Dryopteris marginalis, Pteridium aquilinum var. latiusculum, Tussilago farfara
GT02	Hardwood maple forest tolerant	25.11	79	Yes ¹⁻²	Mature	No	70.5 (High)	Acer saccharum, Quercus rubra	Acer saccharum, Ostrya virginiana	Caulophyllum thalictroides, Dryopteris marginalis, Maianthemum racemosum subsp. racemosum, Trillium grandiflorum
GT03	Oak forest with sugar maples sugar	1.04	3	Yes ²	Mature	No	61.33 (High)	Quercus rubra, Acer saccharum	Acer saccharum, Acer pensylvanicum, Ostrya virginiana	Caulophyllum thalictroides, Dryopteris marginalis, Maianthemum canadense subsp. canadense, Maianthemum racemosum subsp. racemosum, Pteridium aquilinum var. latiusculum, Trillium grandiflorum
GT02	Poplar grove with conifers	0.81	3	No	Young	Yes	28.33 (Low)	Populus tremuloides, Thuja occidentalis	Apocynum androsaemifolium subsp. androsaemifolium, Frangula alnus, Rhus typhina, Populus tremuloides, Thuja occidentalis	Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Winter horsetail, Kentucky bluegrass, Solidago altissima
Terrestrial subtotal		29	91							
Total		31.76	100							

^A As a relative percentage of the total area of the study site

^B 1 = Species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable (Qc), 2 = Vulnerable to harvesting (Qc), 3 = Vulnerable species (Qc), 4 = Threatened species (Qc), 5 = Species of concern (CAN), 6 = Threatened species (CAN), 7 = Species endangered (CAN)

^C Very low: <20%; Low: 21-40%; Medium: 41-60%; High: 61-85%; Very high: >86%

2.7.6 Wildlife

The forest offers suitable habitat potential for wildlife due to the variety of natural environments present and its proximity to the mature forest of Gatineau Park, located west of the study site. The wildlife data for St. Stephen's Forest comes mainly from two camera trap surveys conducted by ACRE in the spring and summer of 2024, as well as surveys organised by WSP on 22 and 23 June 2021 and observations included in iNaturalist. This data, presented in Table 5, confirmed the presence of eight species of mammals, including seven wild species and the domestic cat, and four species of birds.

Table 5: List of wildlife species observed in the forest (Source: Groupe Synergys, 2025, WSP, 2021)

Scientific name	English name	Species status in Quebec	Rank (Nature Serve)
Mammals			
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> *	White-tailed deer	None	S5 – Secure
<i>Felis catus</i> *	Domestic cat	None (Invasive alien species)	None
<i>Canis latrans</i> *	Coyote	None	S5 – Safe
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i> and <i>Sciurus vulgaris</i> *, **	Eastern grey squirrel and red squirrel	None	Not classified
<i>Procyon lotor</i> *	Raccoon	None	S5 – Safe
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i> *	Red fox	None	S5 – Secure
<i>Tamias striatus</i> *, **	Eastern chipmunk	None	S5 – Secure
<i>Ursus americanus</i> ***	Black bear	None	S5 – Safe
Birds			
<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i> *	Wild turkey	None S5	Safe
<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	American robin	None S5	Safe
<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	Black-capped Chickadee	None S5	Secure
<i>Picooides pubescens</i>	Downy Woodpecker	None S5	Safe

* Data from two camera trap surveys conducted by ACRE in 2024.

** Data from surveys conducted by WSP by observing signs and listening for sounds that reveal the presence of different species on 22 and 23 June 2021 (WSP, 2021).

*** Data from the iNaturalist platform.

Other common mammal species in the region, such as the striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) and the common marmot (*Marmota monax*), may also frequent the site.

Wildlife species at risk are presented in the section below.

2.7.7 Species at risk

No fewer than eight plant species and six wildlife species at risk have been detected in the forest (see Table 6).

Table 6: List of species at risk identified in the forest (Sources: Coopérative des Forêts et des Gens, 2024, WSP, 2021, ACRE bat inventories, 2024-2025)

English name	Latin name	LEP	LEMV	Notes
<i>Flora</i>				
Wild leeks	<i>Allium tricoccum</i>	-	Vulnerable	a very large population (Coopérative des Forêts et des Gens, 2024)
American conopholis	<i>Conopholis americana</i>	-	Threatened	a few individuals (Coopérative des Forêts et des Gens, 2024)
Butternut	<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	Endangered	Likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable	3 occurrences (WSP, 2021 and Coopérative des Forêts et des Gens, 2024)
Canadian maidenhair fern	<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	-	Vulnerable to harvesting	5 occurrences (WSP, 2021)
American ostrich fern	<i>Matteuccia pensylvanica</i>	-	Vulnerable to harvesting	1 occurrence (WSP, 2021)
Canadian bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	-	Vulnerable to harvesting	12 occurrences (WSP, 2021)
Large-flowered Uvularia	<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i>	-	Vulnerable to harvesting	6 occurrences (WSP, 2021)
White trillium	<i>Trillium grandiflorum</i>	-	Vulnerable to harvesting	Widespread throughout the site (WSP, 2021)
<i>Fauna</i>				
Eastern Pioui	<i>Contopus virens</i>	Least concern	No status	Recorded occurrence (eBird)
Silver-haired bat	<i>Lasiorycteris noctivagans</i>	-	Likely to be designated as endangered or vulnerable	311 records (ACRE, 2024)*
Hoary bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	-	Likely to be designated endangered or vulnerable	50 records, (ACRE, 2024)*
Eastern red bat	<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	-	Vulnerable	41 records (ACRE, 2024)*
Small brown bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Endangered	Threatened	3 records (ACRE, 2024)*
Tri-coloured bat	<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Endangered	Threatened	13 records (ACRE, 2024)*
* Acoustic bat surveys were conducted by ACRE in 2024. An analysis of the data using the Auto-ID function of the Kaleidoscope software was performed and has not yet been verified manually				

2.7.8 Special features

A special feature of the forest is a well fed by a natural spring.

3 Legal information

3.1 Contracts, agreements, easements existing on the property

According to the title report prepared by Megan Throop in 2025, lot # 6 666 276 is affected by the following easement:

- A real and perpetual easement in favour of Hydro-Québec established by deed of easement, received under private signature, on 7 February 1990, published at the Gatineau Land Registry Office on 20 February 1990, under number 276 195, affecting the northern part of the said lot, with a width of 5 metres along lot 2 735 357, Quebec Cadastre, Gatineau Land Registry;
- The area of this easement could not exceed 25% of the affected land, the total area being only 0.26 acres and encumbering lots 6,666,276 and 6,666,277, along Preston Road.

Parcel 2 of lot 6 666 277 (see Appendix 1) is affected by the following easement:

- A real and perpetual easement in favour of Hydro-Québec established by deed of easement, received under private signature, on 7 February 1990, published at the Gatineau Land Registry Office on 20 February 1990, under number 276 195, affecting the northern part of the said lot, with a width of 5 metres along lot 2 735 357, Quebec Cadastre, Gatineau Land Registry;
- The area of this easement could not exceed 25% of the affected land, the total area being only 0.26 acres and encumbering lots 6,666,276 and 6,666,277, along Preston Road.
- A perpetual easement in favour of Bell Telephone Company of Canada, for the installation of infrastructure, without any specific base, established by deed of easement, received before Notary Georges Lessard on 20 February 1948, under number 87 of his minutes and published at the office of the Gatineau land registry district, on 19 March 1948, under number 19 595 (RB).

Parcel 1 of lot 6,666,277 (see Appendix 2) is not affected by any easement.

3.2 Status or special designation

St. Stephen's Forest is a private protected area that meets [the criteria established by the IUCN](#) and [the criteria taken into account for the possible inclusion of territories in the Quebec Protected Areas Register](#) (in French). The forest is managed by ACRE, a legal entity established to conserve land for the long term. ACRE has already registered the property as "[site naturel protégé par la conservation volontaire](#)" with the Réseau de Milieux Naturels (Site # A1989, 1990 and 1991). The plan is to register the forest as a "milieu naturel de conservation volontaire" in [the Quebec Register of Protected Areas and AMCE](#).

3.3 Municipal zoning and land use designation

The forest is currently zoned RES-CV-11 / residential village centre and MIX1-CV-5 / mixed village centre by the municipality of Chelsea. The municipality will be asked to change the zoning of lot # 6 666 276 to "conservation".

3.4 Property tax information

ACRE is required to pay property and school taxes annually for lot # 6 666 276. St. Stephen's Parish is responsible for property and school taxes for lot # 6 666 277. To date, the parish does not pay any taxes, in accordance with an agreement with the municipality of Chelsea.

3.5 Insurance

ACRE is covered by insurance with BFL Canada. It is the responsibility of the ACRE Board of Directors to ensure that appropriate insurance is in place. For the land subject to the two conservation easements on lot # 6 666 277, St. Stephen's Parish must also obtain a liability insurance policy providing adequate coverage for its activities and responsibilities as mentioned herein and undertakes to maintain this policy in force for the duration of the easements.

4 Management and conservation strategy

4.1 General conservation and management targets

Conservation and management targets	Objectives
Biodiversity	Maintain and restore the wildlife and plant species on the property
Trees	Assess the health of trees, particularly the butternut
Endangered flora and fauna	Maintain and increase the presence of endangered species on the property, particularly a large population of wild leeks
Wetlands and water bodies	Maintain the current area and condition of wetlands and water bodies throughout the property

4.2 Threats to biodiversity

4.2.1 Tree mortality due to disease and pathogens

Several tree species in the region are currently affected by various diseases causing the decline and death of many trees. A mortality rate of over 90% has been observed in butternuts (*Juglans cinerea*), a species at risk in Canada, present in the northern part of the forest due to the presence of butternut canker (*Ophiognomonia clavignenti-juglandacearum*), which affects this species throughout the region. Symptoms include premature yellowing of foliage, drying of branches, sunken lesions on the bark and exudation of dark liquids. The spread of the disease is favoured by humid conditions, insect vectors and human activities (transport of contaminated wood, forestry equipment). There is also a high infestation rate in American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), which is affected by beech bark disease resulting from an interaction between the beech scale insect (*Cryptococcus fagisuga*), an invasive insect, and two pathogenic fungi. It is estimated that trees currently infected could succumb to the disease within 15 years. There is also a severe mortality rate among American ash trees due to the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) epidemic currently ravaging the entire region (Kolka et al., 2018). However, dead butternut trees, large-leaved beeches and ash trees do not appear to pose an immediate threat to public safety along the trails, as they are generally well dispersed throughout the forest and far from the trails.

Should any cutting be necessary along the trails on the property, tree felling should be carried out outside the bird nesting season and the presence of vulnerable plants, preferably between May and August.

4.2.2 Forest degradation due to climate change

Violent windstorms such as the Derecho of May 2022 or ice storms such as that of April 2023 are predicted to become more frequent with climate change. These phenomena can cause many mature trees or branches to fall, creating a safety issue for users, but also for the ecology of the forest, particularly by degrading the microhabitats of mature forests where shade-tolerant species, including some species at risk, are found. On the other hand, the opening up of the forest canopy in some areas may be beneficial for other species at risk (e.g., eastern wood-pigeon) and may, over time, promote greater heterogeneity or complexity in the forest structure.

4.2.3 Plant harvesting

The forest has a very large population of wild leeks (*Allium tricoccum*) and other plants that are vulnerable to harvesting (see Table 6). Many plants are found near trails, making them vulnerable to harvesting. It is important not to include information on species vulnerable to harvesting in iNaturalist.

4.2.4 Encroachment

According to the baseline documentation report (Groupe Synergys, 2025), the car park belonging to Spa Nordik on Chemin Nordik slightly encroaches on the property, over a length of approximately 35 m and a maximum width of approximately 7 m. This area has not been marked out on the ground, but has been visible on satellite images since 2014. It would be necessary to verify the actual extent of the encroachment with the help of a land surveyor. Given that the forest is located in the centre of the municipality and surrounded by businesses and private properties, any future encroachment will need to be monitored.

4.2.5 Invasive alien plant species

According to the baseline documentation report (Groupe Synergys, 2025), two invasive alien plant species were observed in the forest during the field visit. The first is alder buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*), a shrub that was noted in five locations: one in each of the MH01, MH02 and MH03 wetlands, one in the GT01 terrestrial environment, and one widespread throughout the GT04 terrestrial environment (see Appendix 2). In wetland MH01, it is one of the dominant species in the shrub layer, with an absolute cover of 20%. It covers 10% in wetland MH02, 5% in wetland MH03, less than 5% in

terrestrial environment GT01 and 10% in terrestrial environment GT04. The second species observed is purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), with a single occurrence seen in wetland MH02 with an absolute coverage of 10%.

4.2.6 Impact of canids on fauna and flora

Although the forest is currently used by a relatively small number of dog walkers (5 per trap night, according to two surveys conducted by ACRE in 2024), the increase in visitor numbers and the number of dogs off the leash could become more problematic. Indeed, several recent studies have shown that the regular presence of dogs along trails in natural environments can cause significant disturbance to wildlife (Lenth et al., 2006; Banks and Bryant, 2007; Weston and Stankowich, 2013; Parsons et al., 2016; De Frenne et al., 2022). This threat is not currently well documented on the property and could therefore be the subject of more in-depth studies or monitoring in the future.

4.3 Conservation strategies and targets

Objectives	Strategies/actions
Maintain biodiversity on the property	Continue regular biodiversity surveys through citizen science (iNaturalist, eBird) Update the ACRE biodiversity database annually Assess the distribution and impact of invasive alien plant species (e.g., buckthorn) across the property and take control measures as needed Reduce the impact of hikers by educating them to stay on existing trails at all times and not to create new ones Cut down dangerous dead trees outside of the forest bird nesting season (mid-April to late August) Initiate a programme to install and monitor bat houses Understand the impact of dogs on wildlife
Assess tree health	Assess the severity and extent of disease in large-leaved beech, butternut, and ash trees through biennial or quinquennial monitoring and permanent plots based on the existing ACRE protocol Study the possibility of reintroducing healthy hickory trees in certain areas of the property and search for sources of hickory trees that are believed to be resistant
Maintain and increase the presence of endangered wildlife and plant species on the property	Continue bat inventories between June and September and hire an expert to analyse the data already collected

	<p>Conduct additional inventories of plants vulnerable to harvesting and plants at risk along the trail network, relocate sections of trails that may harm these plants</p> <p>Maintain a high density of dying and dead mature trees (away from trails)</p> <p>Submit data on species at risk to the Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec (CDPNQ)</p>
Maintain the size and condition of wetlands and water bodies on the property	Assess the current condition of water environments

4.4 Assessment of the conservation status of the property and targets

The overall health of the ecosystems on the property is considered acceptable, due to mature forest cover that has been relatively undisturbed by recent human activities, despite the presence of several threats identified in section 4.2. The trails are also in very good condition. However, prolonged periods of drought and episodes of strong winds (e.g., derecho), associated with climate change, have caused many trees to fall in several areas of the property. This conservation target will therefore be one of the most difficult to achieve, since climate change is a global factor, independent of actions that can be implemented at the property level.

4.5 Action plan and timetable

Targets	Strategies/Actions	Deadline	Priority (Short term = 1; Medium term = 2; Long term = 3)	Responsible parties/partners	Results
Biodiversity	Continue regular biodiversity surveys through citizen science (Bioblitz, iNaturalist, eBird)	2031	1	ACRE	Increased ecological knowledge of habitat distribution, threats and use
	Update the ACRE biodiversity database annually	As needed	2	ACRE	
	Assess the distribution and impact of invasive alien plant species (e.g., buckthorn) across the property and take control measures as necessary	2031	1	ACRE, Colleges, universities, local experts	
	Reduce the impact of hikers by educating them to stay on existing trails at all times and not to create new ones	2031	1	ACRE	Reduction of disturbance to wildlife by certain human activities and reduction of habitat degradation through increased awareness among users
	Cut down dangerous dead trees outside of the forest bird nesting season (mid-April to late August)	As needed	1	ACRE	
	Initiate a programme to install and monitor bat houses	2031	3	ACRE	Increase in the potential of bat roosting and maternity habitats
	Understand the impact of dogs on wildlife	2031	2	ACRE	
Tree health	Assess the severity and extent of disease in large-leaved beech, butternut and ash trees through biennial or quinquennial monitoring and permanent plots based on the existing ACRE protocol	2036	2	ACRE, Local experts	Increased knowledge related to tree pathogens and diseases
	Study the possibility of reintroducing healthy butternuts in certain areas of the property's and search for sources of butternuts that are believed to be resistant	As needed	3	ACRE, Colleges, universities, local experts	Recovery of a species at risk

Endangered flora and fauna	Continue bat inventories between June and September and hire an expert to analyse the data already collected	2036	3	ACRE, Colleges, universities, local experts	Increased knowledge of the distribution and ecology of bats
	Conduct additional inventories of plants vulnerable to harvesting and endangered plants along the trail network, relocate sections of trails that may harm these plants	2031	2	ACRE	Increase in the quantity and quality of habitat for endangered flora and fauna
	Maintain a high density of dying and dead mature trees (away from trails)	2036	2	ACRE	
	Submit data on species at risk to the Quebec Natural Heritage Data Centre (CDPNQ)	Annually	2	ACRE	
Wetlands and aquatic environments	Assess the current state of water environments and implement conservation measures as necessary	2031	2	ACRE	

5 Property management arrangements

5.1 Stewardship Endowment Fund and budget

ACRE currently has a stewardship endowment fund policy in accordance with [the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices](#) (2019). For each land acquisition (full or partial title, easement or other), ACRE establishes a stewardship endowment fund. When the fair market value of the land is less than \$1 million, ACRE allocates 10% of the fair market value to the endowment fund. For lands valued at \$1 million or more, ACRE may modify the initial allocation as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors to cover anticipated long-term stewardship costs.

5.2 Authorised activities

5.2.1 Public access

A 1.5 km network of trails currently exists on the property and is used by citizens of neighbouring neighbourhoods mainly for hiking, jogging and dog walking. These trails connect to a larger network of trails located in the surrounding woodlands and neighbourhoods (see [the Sentiers Chelsea Trails website](#)).

The property can be accessed from several entrances. Parcel 2, which is subject to a perpetual conservation easement, is accessible via four entrances located in the town of Chelsea: via Preston Road via a trail located slightly east of the junction with Chemin de la Colline, via a trail belonging to the MRC des Collines-del'Outaouais, accessible from the southwest corner of Parcel 2 and via Old Chelsea Road east of the cemetery, then via a trail crossing the centre of the cemetery on a north-south axis. Parcel 1, which is subject to a 25-year easement, is accessible from the trails that cross Parcel 2, as well as from a car park belonging to Spa Nordik, located on Nordik Road.

5.2.2 Signage

As of January 2025, the only signage present is "No bicycles," "Stop dog pollution! Please scoop the poop!," "Respect nature and private property !" and "Community trail, partner - Chelsea Trails" signs at the Preston Road access point. There is also a sign asking people to pick up after their dogs at the entrance to the forest, behind the church. Other signage will be installed, such as a

sign bearing the name of the forest, a donor recognition sign, and trail markings to limit human hiking outside the trails.

5.2.3 Scientific activities

We have created [an iNaturalist collection project for the forest](#). We have included wildlife data from camera traps that we have already collected there.

5.2.4 Interpretation, education and recreation activities

A bioblitz and nature walks organised by ACRE could be considered in the short and medium term to monitor biodiversity trends and promote public awareness of conservation in Chelsea's natural environments. Off-trail or off-path pedestrian traffic for the general public is not permitted in the forest.

5.2.5 Infrastructure

There are currently no buildings on the property. The only confirmed infrastructure is the walking trails shown on the [Sentiers Chelsea Trails map](#) (Chelsea Ouest). Hiking on the trails is permitted in the forest. Other authorized infrastructure includes minor improvements made in recognition of donors, such as benches.

5.2.6 Restoration of species at risk

Species at risk (mammals and plants) are currently known to occur on the property, and monitoring of these populations is planned by the stewardship committee members.

5.2.7 Management of invasive alien species

Training could be provided to stewardship committee members to help them better identify invasive alien species on the property. Buckthorn and purple loosestrife are present in the forest, and control activities could be planned in the short and medium term to limit their spread.

5.2.8 Tree cutting

Minor work required for routine trail maintenance, work required to ensure user safety, or work required to control invasive alien species is permitted. The recommended period for cutting is after mid-August, following the bird nesting season, and preferably in winter when the ground is frozen and plants are dormant.

5.2.9 Monitoring, maintenance and management activities

Property maintenance work will be the responsibility of the stewardship committee and will mainly consist of installing infrastructure (e.g., wooden walkways) to limit environmental impacts. Sections of trails that are rarely or never used may also be closed to the public for restoration purposes.

In terms of monitoring, several citizens who walk the property daily may serve as guardians of the property. They report any problems they observe during their walks.

The dates of visits and observations made could be documented in a visit tracking document, separate from the management plan. Observations could be supported by photographs and GPS coordinates. This log would also be accessible to ACRE.

5.3 Prohibited activities (according to conservation easements)

- a) harvesting, picking, destroying or cutting vegetation or woody materials, including dying or dead trees, with the exception of minor work required for the routine maintenance of infrastructure in the forest, work required to ensure the safety of trail users, or work required in the context of controlling invasive alien species;
- b) maple syrup production activities;
- c) filling, digging, paving, excavation, extraction of mineral or organic materials, or other soil modification work, with the exception of (i) work required in the context of activities to control invasive alien species previously authorized by ACRE, and (ii) activities to manage the habitat of threatened species previously authorized by ACRE;
- d) activities involving pumping, drainage, dewatering, or diversion of surface or groundwater, except for minor work required for trail maintenance;

- e) erection or construction of infrastructure, buildings, parking lots, telecommunications towers, electricity or gas distribution networks, oil pipelines, or installation or storage of trailers, tents, tent trailers or any other type of dwelling, outbuildings or buildings;
- f) the widening of existing roads or the construction of new roads;
- g) the widening of existing trails or the development of new trails, unless such work is deemed necessary to channel public traffic within the forest. Any modification of a trail or development of a new trail must first be submitted to ACRE for approval to ensure that the planned work and infrastructure will not cause significant or irreversible damage to the forest's natural environments or be a source of disturbance that could affect the viability of the forest's flora and fauna populations. Trails must be built outside of fragile environments (EFE, occurrence of EMV, slopes greater than 20%, thin soil, wetlands) and may not exceed two metres in width.
- h) Motorised or mechanical vehicle traffic, including bicycles, unless such activities are related to management and maintenance.
- i) motorised or mechanical vehicle traffic, including bicycles and horses, except for travel required in cases of force majeure or for infrastructure and trail management and maintenance activities and forest restoration. Except in cases of force majeure, or in the context of work to combat invasive alien species, as well as any work requiring travel on frozen ground, such travel shall be restricted to trails that have been developed and designated for this purpose. ACRE must be informed in advance of any planned travel on frozen ground;
- j) off-trail walking for the general public;
- k) the use of pesticides, fertilisers, herbicides or any other chemical inputs, except those required by the relevant government authorities in connection with public health issues or to control insect epidemics and cryptogamic diseases;
- l) the introduction of plant or animal species that are non-native to the receiving environment or genetically modified, including domestic or companion animals not kept on a leash;
- m) the discharge, spreading, depositing, burying, immersing and storing of waste or other hazardous materials or products;
- n) temporary activities, such as camping or lighting fires;
- o) access to the forest for the use of fishing rods, firearms or any other type of weapon or trap;
- p) the fragmentation or subdivision of the forest, as well as the registration of a mortgage, easement, right or charge of any kind against it, without first obtaining the written authorisation of ACRE;
- q) the leasing of the land.

5.4 Ecological monitoring and surveillance

ACRE, or its representatives, as well as the members of the stewardship committee, must visit the property at any time without giving prior notice to the parish, in order to assess the condition of the premises and carry out the studies, inventories, surveys and tests necessary to ensure compliance with conservation easements at least once a year. Ecological monitoring will be carried out in part by collecting biodiversity data using an iNaturalist project, camera traps, bat detectors and other equipment necessary to achieve certain monitoring objectives.

The dates of visits and observations made should always be documented in a visit monitoring document, separate from the management plan. Observations should be supported by photographs and GPS coordinates. This ensures that a record is kept and that information is accessible to all. It also provides protection in the event of a third-party claim for injury, damage or other issues.

As mentioned above, stewardship committee members will also conduct regular visits to the forest and report information to ACRE on a regular basis, through logs or other means.

5.5 Communications

5.5.1 Marking and identification of property boundaries

Property boundaries should be clearly marked with bilingual signs identifying the property as a "community managed protected area" in French and English. In addition, trail marking could encourage users to stay on the trails and limit the creation of new trails.

5.5.2 Volunteering opportunities

Volunteer opportunities on the property are mainly related to trail restoration and monitoring activities carried out by members of the stewardship committee. The committee will regularly call on volunteers (local residents) to carry out certain tasks on the property.

5.5.3 Neighbourhood relations

ACRE will seek to maintain good relations with the property's immediate neighbours, including residents of adjacent neighbourhoods, Gatineau Park and Chelsea municipal managers, Friends of Gatineau Park, businesses around the forest and the Meredith Centre, as well as Hydro Québec, in order to facilitate property management.

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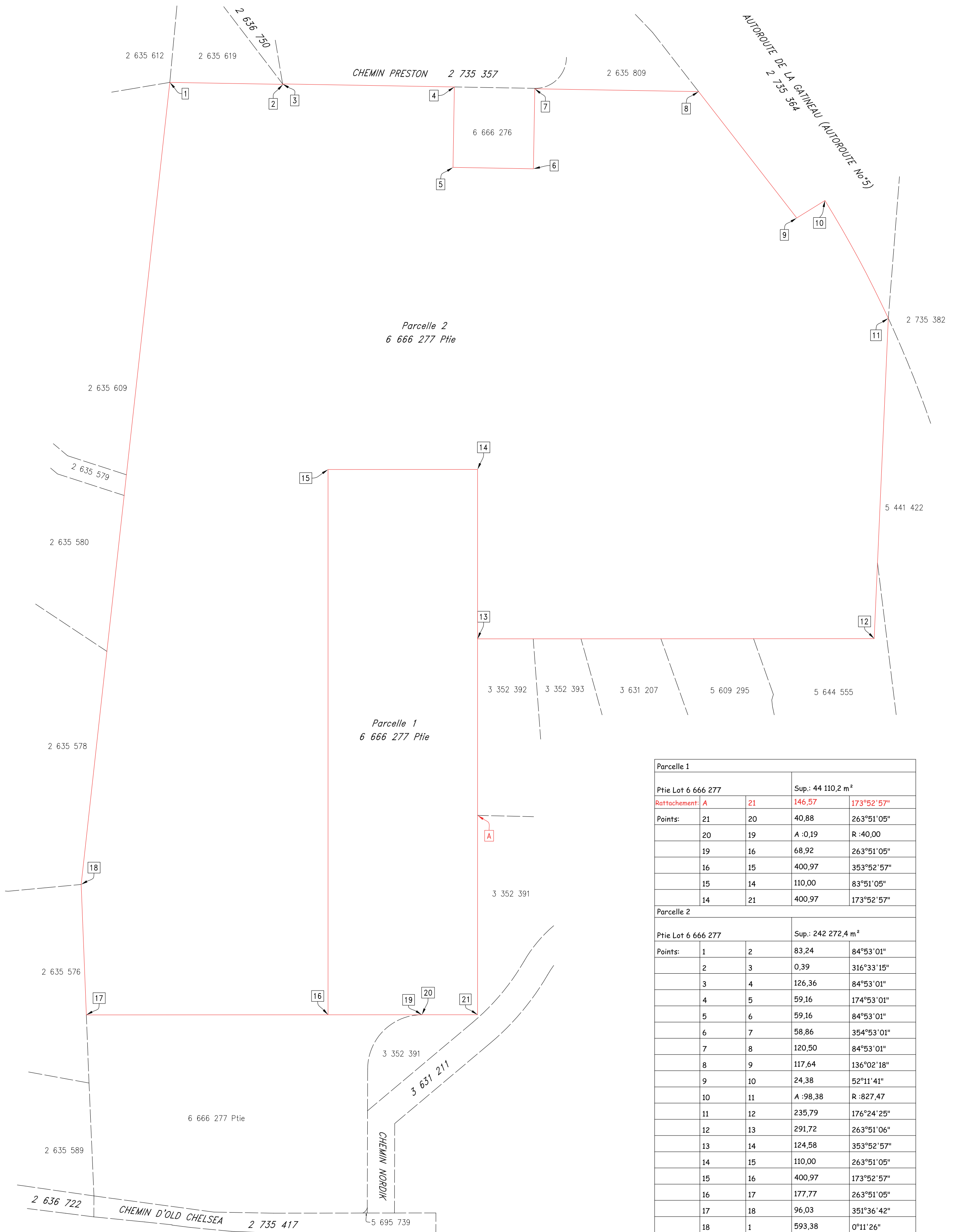
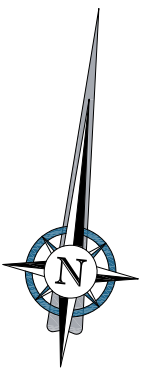
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7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of parcels



NOTES :

- Les directions apparaissant sur ce document sont des gisements en référence au système SCOPQ NAD83.
- Cette description technique a été créée pour des servitudes de conservation.

Vraie copie de la minute originale conservée dans mon greffe

Arpenture-géomètre

PLAN ACCOMPAGNANT LA DESCRIPTION TECHNIQUE

M.B.

DT_666277.dwg

Client : Action Chelsea pour le Respect de l'Environnement (ACRE)

Préparé à Gatineau, le 4 août 2025

Pties lot 6 666 277
Cadastré du Québec
Circonscription foncière de Gatineau
Municipalité de Chelsea

Marie Eve R. Tremblay

Unité de mesures : Système métrique
Échelle 1 : 2000 (mètres)



Signé numériquement par
Marie Eve R. Tremblay
Arpenture-géomètre

Dossier : 116858 Minute : 7157

**CANADA
 PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC
 CIRCONSCRIPTION FONCIÈRE DE GATINEAU**

DESCRIPTION TECHNIQUE

Toutes ces parcelles de terrain de forme irrégulière faisant PARTIES du lot SIX MILLIONS SIX CENT SOIXANTE-SIX MILLE DEUX CENT SOIXANTE-DIX-SEPT (Pties lot 6 666 277), suivant le plan de cadastre du Québec, Circonscription foncière de Gatineau, Municipalité de Chelsea, Province de Québec et pouvant être plus particulièrement décrites comme suit:

PARCELLE "1"

Rattachement:

Commençant au point "21" sur une limite Est du lot 6 666 277, lequel point étant situé à une distance de cent quarante-six mètres et cinquante-sept centièmes (146,57 m) mesurée suivant un gisement de 173°52'57", le long de ladite limite Est du lot 6 666 277, depuis le coin Sud-Ouest du lot 3 352 392, point "A".

Description de la parcelle:

du point	au point	Distances	Directions
21	20	40,88	263°51'05"
20	19	A: 0,19	R: 40,00
19	16	68,92	263°51'05"
16	15	400,97	353°52'57"
15	14	110,00	83°51'05"
14	21	400,97	173°52'57"

Ladite parcelle de terrain est bornée vers le Nord et l'Ouest par partie du lot 6 666 277, vers l'Est par partie du lot 6 666 277 et par les lots 3 352 392 et 3 352 391, vers le Sud par le lot 3 352 391 et par partie du lot 6 666 277 et contient en superficie quarante-quatre mille cent dix mètres carrés et deux dixièmes (44 110,2 m²).

PARCELLE "2"

Rattachement:

Commençant au point "1", lequel point étant le coin Nord-Ouest du lot 6 666 277.

Description de la parcelle:

du point	au point	Distances	Directions
1	2	83,24	84°53'01"
2	3	0,39	316°33'15"
3	4	126,36	84°53'01"
4	5	59,16	174°53'01"
5	6	59,16	84°53'01"
6	7	58,86	354°53'01"
7	8	120,50	84°53'01"
8	9	117,64	136°02'18"
9	10	24,38	52°11'41"
10	11	A: 98,38	R: 827,47
11	12	235,79	176°24'25"
12	13	291,72	263°51'06"
13	14	124,58	353°52'57"

14	15	110,00	263°51'05"
15	16	400,97	173°52'57"
16	17	177,77	263°51'05"
17	18	96,03	351°36'42"
18	1	593,38	0°11'26"

Ladite parcelle de terrain est bornée vers le Nord par le lot 2 635 619, par le chemin Preston (lot 2 735 357) et par les lots 6 666 276 et 2 635 809, vers le Nord-Est et le Nord-Ouest par l'autoroute de la Gatineau / autoroute N° 5 (lot 2 735 364), vers l'Est par les lots 6 666 276, 5 441 422, 5 644 555 et par partie du lot 6 666 277, vers le Sud par les lots 5 644 555, 5 609 295, 3 631 207, 3 352 393, 3 352 392 et par des parties du lot 6 666 277, vers l'Ouest par les lots 2 635 576, 2 635 578, 2 635 580, 2 635 579, 2 635 609, 6 666 276 et par partie du lot 6 666 277, vers le Sud-Ouest par le lot 2 635 619 et contient en superficie deux cent quarante-deux mille deux cent soixante-douze mètres carrés et quatre dixièmes (242 272,4 m²).

Dans la présente description et sur le plan qui l'accompagne, les dimensions sont dans le système métrique et les directions sont des gisements en référence au système SCOPQ NAD83.

Préparé à Gatineau, Québec, ce 4^e jour d'août 2025, sous le numéro de dossier 116858 et le numéro 7157 des minutes de l'arpenteure-géomètre soussignée.

Marie Eve R. Tremblay

Signé numériquement par
Marie Eve R. Tremblay, a.-g.
ALARY, ST-PIERRE & DUROCHER,
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.

Vraie copie de la minute
originale conservée
dans mon greffe

.....
Marie Eve R. Tremblay
Arpenteure-géomètre

Appendix 2: Map of plant communities in the forest (WSP, 2021)

