



Annual Report
2024-2025

INTRODUCTION

Friends of Forêt-la-Blanche are pleased to present this report on their activities at the Ecological Reserve for the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025. Among other things, it includes a description of our main achievements (educational program and trail maintenance), an overview of the number of visitors and of the organization's sources of funding, as well as a presentation of our employees, volunteers and Board of Directors.

Achievements

2024-2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of Friends of Forêt-la-Blanche, a non-profit organization which, through an agreement with the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP) manages the educational program and the trails of the ecological reserve. For the past 25 years, thanks to the involvement of Friends of Forêt-la-Blanche, the ecological reserve has been one of only five in Quebec (out of a total of 72) that are accessible to the general public.



EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

- 66 educational panels developed and installed by the MELCCFP in collaboration with the Director of the Interpretation Centre.
- Educational booklets on flora and fauna, and animal tracks made available to visitors.
- Ferns: a large poster on the various ferns found on the trails was produced and installed in the small pavilion at the entrance to the trails.

25 years of citizen involvement with a mission to safeguard the ecological integrity of the Forêt-la-Blanche territory through forest awareness, conservation and public engagement.

- History and age of trees: 2 sections of tree trunks were pyrographed with the dates of more than 20 historical events that have taken place over the last 150 years, to help visitors better visualize the age of our venerable trees.
- Ancient trees: Wooden signs were installed in front of each of the 13 ancient trees that were part of the dendrochronological study. These pyrographed signs indicate the tree species in French, English, Algonquin and Latin, as well as the tree's germination date.
- Self-guided tour: An interactive map (in French and English) posted on our website and hosted on the ONDAGO application, which can be downloaded and used offline while walking on the trails. Photos and a narrative explaining various aspects of the ecological reserve are available at each of the 10 points (sites) of the self-guided tour.

> EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

- Guided tour of spring plants, led by François Lambert, botanist.
- Educational days with school groups (École des Vallons and École Pierre-Savard) and day camps (Lac Long, Mayo and Val-des-Bois).
- School contest with 12 elementary schools located within a radius of approximately 20 km from Forêt-la-Blanche, enabling winning classes to participate in a free educational day, including free transportation. A total of 197 students (9 classes from grade 3 to 6) prepared a pre-visit project, and took part in an educational day at Forêt-la-Blanche.
- Ancient Tree Rally, a fun activity to raise awareness of the old-growth tree circuit.



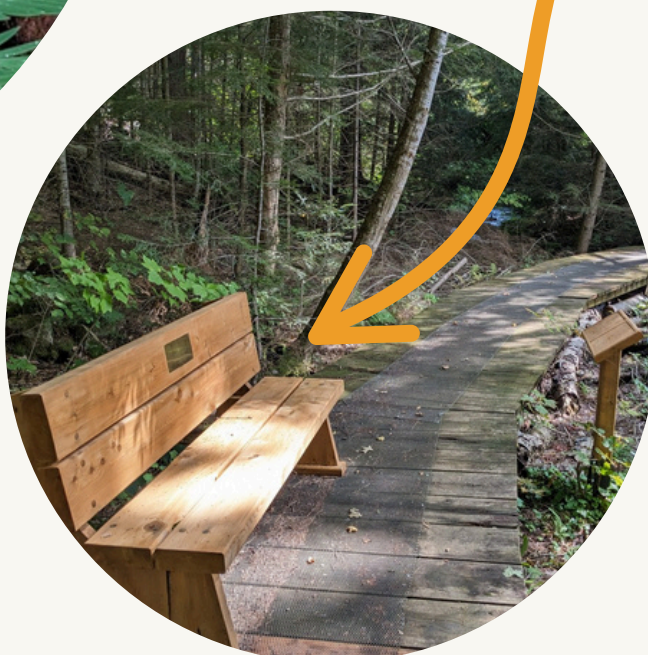
> **UNIVERSITY GROUPS**

Several university groups visited the ecological reserve for field days led by forestry experts and researchers from the Université du Québec à Rimouski and l'Université du Québec en Outaouais/Institut des Sciences de la Forêt tempérée (ISFORT). These visits enabled students and researchers to deepen their knowledge of the ecological reserve's forest inventory and ancient trees.

> **CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

- A lot of work was done to improve or secure the ecological reserve's infrastructure:
 - o Construction and installation of 12 benches and of 12 poetry signs
 - o Widening and construction/repair of footbridges and lookouts
 - o Consolidation of bridges and stairways
- Regular trail maintenance was carried out throughout the year by staff and volunteers.

Commemorative bench



NUMBER OF VISITORS

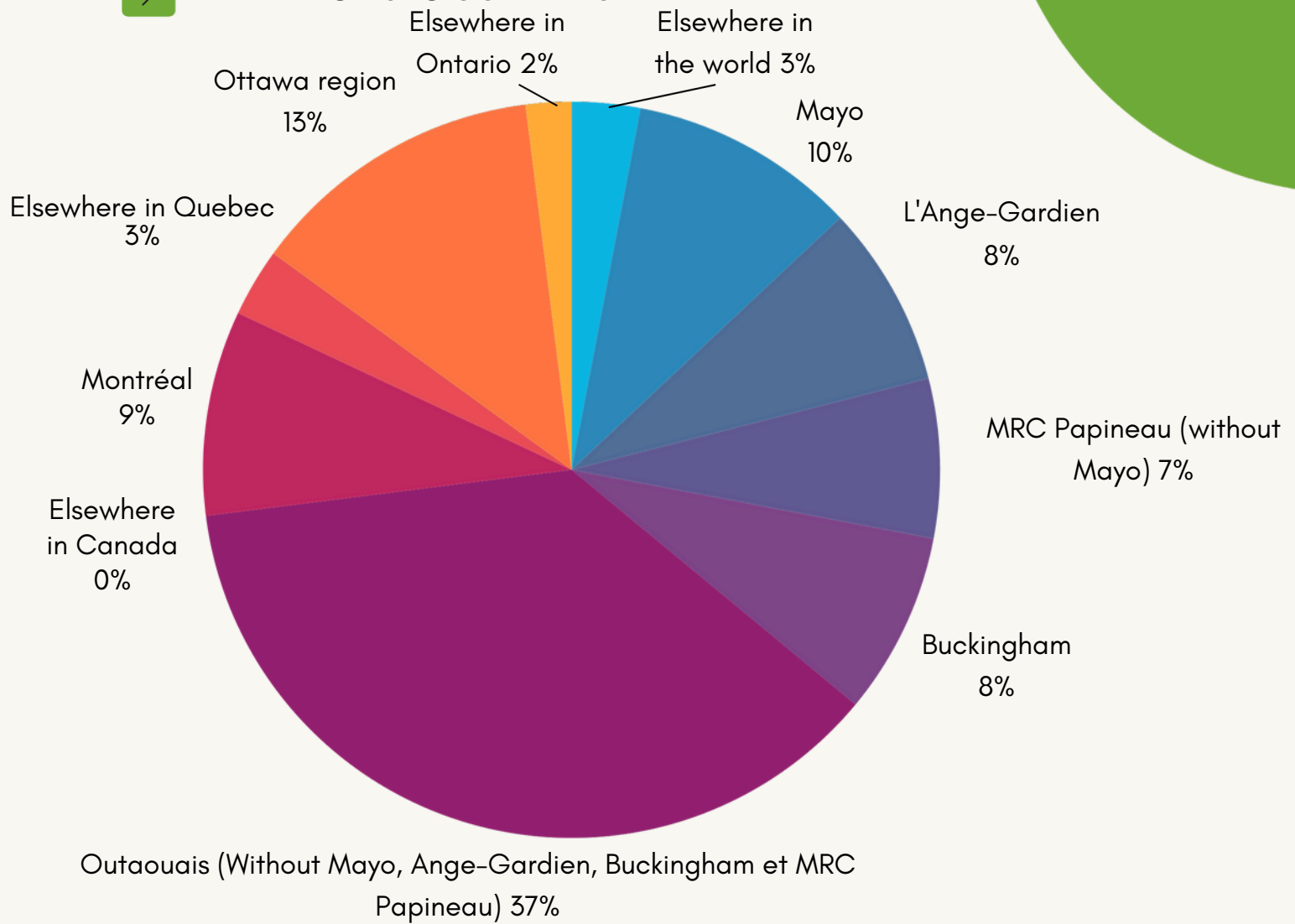
The number of visitors in 2024 remained relatively the same as in 2023. However, we have more than doubled the number of students taking part in educational days.

<i>MONTHS</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>
January	240	155
February	280 (52)*	122
March	270	208
April	67	144
May	176	303 (53)*
June	174 (30)*	241
July	291 (9)*	278 (14)*
August	423	368 (36)*
September	417	475
October	769 (24)*	1042 (197)*
November	491	267
December	121 (20)*	82
TOTAL	3719 (135)*	3685 (300)*

*** # *Educative Program***



WHERE VISITORS COME FROM



FUNDING

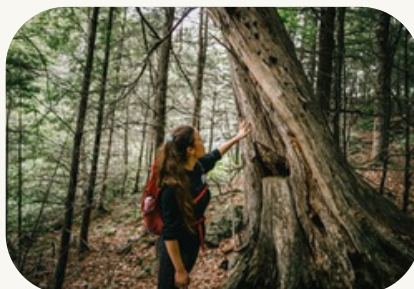
Thanks to a grant from the MELCCFP, we were able to hire key staff and carry out many activities. Other grants and donations, as well as the rental of premises for community activities, enabled us to have enough funds to open the Interpretation Centre and provide public access to trails year-round.

> **GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

- Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs: \$134,047
- Canada Summer Jobs: \$9,783 to hire two young people during the summer
- Municipalities: Mayo (\$3,000) and L'Ange-Gardien (\$450)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Community library, maintained by two volunteers who work in collaboration with the Friends la Forêt-la-Blanche.
- Free daily passes: as part of an agreement with the public libraries of Gatineau and those of the Réseau Biblio de l'Outaouais, family daily passes were donated to the various branches, where they can be borrowed. In 2024-2025, 30 families visited the ecological reserve thanks to this initiative.



STAFF

- Robin Stolba, Director, Interpretation Centre
- Jim McEachern, Manager, maintenance and construction
- Joanne Lagacé, Finance Manager (on contract)
- Abby Rose Cameron, reception and trail maintenance
- Jade St-Louis, reception and trail maintenance (Canada Summer Jobs and weekends)
- Gabrielle Abraham, reception and trail maintenance (Canada Summer Jobs and weekends)
- Malou Longboat, reception (weekends)
- Trinity Covey, reception (weekends)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In 2024-25, the members of the Board of Directors are :

- Renée Giroux, President
- Hélène Goulet, Vice-President
- François Lambert, Treasurer
- Line Laporte, Secretary
- Robbie Ryan, Director
- Christine Vallières, Director
- Mireille Gagnon, Director



PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

- Réseau BIBLIO de l'Outaouais and Gatineau libraries
- Tourisme Outaouais
- Tourisme Petit-Nation
- Rando-Québec
- Kéroul (partial accessibility certification)

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

- A new video on the history of Forêt-la-Blanche is available on our website:
<https://www.foretla blanche.org/medias/>
- Advertising via Tourisme Petite Nation and Tourisme Outaouais
- Trail information on several platforms (Balise Québec, Passeport Vacances and Ondago)



ADMINISTRATION

- Collaboration with a specialized firm to comply with Bill 25 on the protection of personal information.
- Room rental policy in the process of being finalized.
- Change of banking institution to reduce costs and access better services.
- Purchase of a mobile reader to accept on-site payments by credit and ATM cards.

VOLUNTEERS IN 2024-2025

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| • Gary Bougard Marsha | • Véronique Harrington |
| • Bougard Jane Brown | • François Lambert |
| • Abby Cameron Jack | • Line Laporte |
| • Carling Jean-François | • Danielle Ledoux |
| • Davignon Mireille | • Kathryn Maloney |
| • Gagnon Renée Giroux | • Jim McEachern |
| • Xavier Giroux-Bougard | • Hunter Roos |
| • Hélène Goulet | • Robbie Ryan |
| | • James Somers |
| | • Benoit Tremblay |
| | • Christine Vallières |

They contributed around 1,000 volunteer hours to 2024-2025. We thank them for their invaluable contribution!

We would like to thank the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP), as well as the municipalities of Mayo and L'Ange-Gardien for their generous financial support. We would also like to thank the Canada Employment Summer program for their grant in 2024, and all our visitors and donors. This financial support is essential to enable us to continue our mission.





→ WWW.FORETLABLANCHE.ORG ↑

