

A River Runs Through It!

SLT's Latest Conservation Project

The Little River and its tributaries drain nearly the entire town of Stowe. Over the years, it has suffered from encroachment, flooding and loss of stream bank vegetation. Historic river "management" techniques such as channel straightening, dredging and armoring of the river banks (rip-rap) has caused many rivers in Vermont to "down-cut" or scour out their river beds and consequently lose access to their traditional floodplains. Once this process is set in motion it is difficult to reverse.

Think of the Little River as a ribbon of energy. If the river doesn't have access to its floodplain, the energy stays within the channel and becomes powerful. During heavy rainfall and spring run-off the energy of the river is trapped in these channels until it can find a place to release that energy – often with devastating consequences. The powerful current can wipe out roads and scour away prime agricultural soils leading to harmful erosion and expensive repairs.

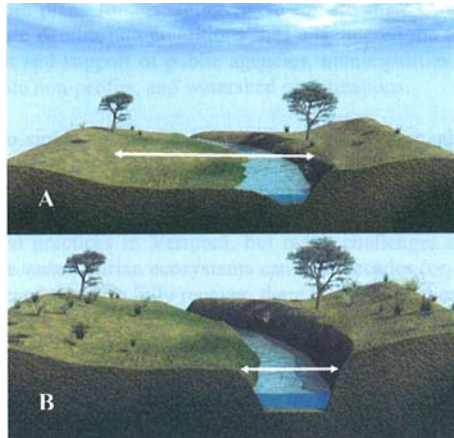
As development occurs in the watershed, impervious surfaces such as driveways and rooftops contribute to faster run-off and more powerful scouring of river banks. If careful consideration isn't given to where we develop, we put both our water quality and our infrastructure at risk.

According to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Vermont taxpayers spend an average of \$18 - \$20 million per year to keep rivers straightened and static in the landscape, exacerbating channel down-cutting. According to USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, more money has been spent to maintain the West Branch of the Little River than any other river in Lamoille County, and possibly, the entire state. Today's river management strategies seek ways to resolve or avoid conflicts between human investments and

river systems in ways that are technically sound, and both economically and ecologically sustainable.

Water is a powerful force, and the approach we take to river management should respect this fact and focus on how land use can accommodate the river's dynamic needs rather than attempt to control

the river in a static state. Fortunately we have some tools at our disposal to help achieve this goal. The tool we use is a **river corridor easement**. With this easement, land trusts and government agencies purchase the *channel intervention* and *riparian management* rights within river corridors also know as the meander belt or Fluvial Erosion Hazard Area (FEHA). Prohibiting development in the FEHA is one way to help our rivers recover. Another way is to work with individual willing landowners



Loss of critical floodplain when a river undergoes channel "down-cutting."

~Now Taking Reservations~
 Do your spring cleaning
 and support
 an important cause at
 the Green Flea Market!

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"The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

- Nelson Henderson

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Stowe Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation of scenic, recreational, and productive farm and forest lands for the benefit of the greater Stowe community.

All contributions to Stowe Land Trust are tax-deductible. Please become a member today.

From the Executive Director and Board Chair



Gaetano Vicinelli

With this year's heavy snowfall and the arrival of warm rains comes the ever-present threat of spring flooding. Our waterways manage the effects of powerful runoff by distributing accumulated soil particles onto our farm fields but also by scouring out new channels for the river to maneuver. Carrying away loads of sediments and gallons of pollutants, rivers cleanse and renew the landscape each spring.

SLT is excited to be working with landowners along the Little River to begin protecting critical floodplains from future encroachment and inappropriate management. As we continue to seek ways of decreasing our impact on the planet, protecting river floodplains, harvesting rainwater, and reducing the use of toxic pollutants in our home are tangible ways of

making a difference not only for rivers, but on entire ecosystems.

Spring is a time of renewal, so in celebration I hope you will join us in renewing your commitment to conservation. How? Attend our Green Flea Market and participate in reducing, reusing and recycling; commit to permanently eliminating toxic chemicals from your garage that can get into our waterways; harvest rainwater for your garden; or make a financial commitment to SLT that will enable us to continue protecting our rivers and streams. Happy Spring!

(cont. from Page 1)

who want to protect the river's traditional floodplain and help the river achieve balance – or equilibrium. Stowe Land Trust is currently partnering with DEC on a project that will apply this kind of easement to critical areas along the Little River.



In July, 2004, significant rains caused devastating erosion along the Stowe Bike Path. The path has been re-routed several times to accommodate a river that needs access to its floodplain.

The stretch of river below the River Road bridge, off Route 100 in Stowe's Lower

Village, is one of these critical areas.



It is a place where the river, after running a channeled course, finally has access to its floodplain, where it can dissipate some of its energy. Like our traditional conservation easements where we acquire and hold development rights, this river corridor easement is completely voluntary, and in some cases the landowner can be compensated. Since SLT will hold the channel intervention rights, we have the opportunity to work with the DEC to provide river management support. The DEC and the Stowe Conservation Commission have generously provided funding for the completion of this project.

SLT's first project on the Little River will protect approximately 10 acres on either side of the river. The easement prohibits landowners from rip-rapping the river banks and from encroachments that may affect the river's ability to meander naturally in its floodplain. We are excited to partner with DEC, the Conservation Commission and Stowe landowners on this first river corridor easement on the Little River!

Send us your thoughts, we value your opinion.

We welcome your letters and e-mails anytime. Please send letters to the editor to P.O. Box 284, Stowe, VT 05672 or e-mail them to info@stowelandtrust.org.

Stowe Land Trust's Green Flea Market Reduce, Re-use, Recycle!

~Be Part of This Fun Community Event~

When: Saturday, May 24, 2008
8:00—3:00 PM

Where: Stowe Elementary School

Register for a table: \$35 for 8' x 6' space. Complete a registration form by downloading it from www.stowelandtrust.org, or contact us at (802) 253-7221.

Benefits: Stowe Land Trust provides the venue and the advertising. You just have to come ready to sell your treasures, enjoy great food and entertainment, and you keep the money from your sales!

Admission: \$2.50 for adults, free for children under 10.

Community

Birding with Audubon VT Saturday, May 10th

Stowe Land Trust and Audubon Vermont are offering a Saturday morning bird walk at Pinnacle Meadow. Conserved by Stowe Land Trust in 2002, this 134-acre property is primarily forested with an upper elevation meadow on the flanks of Stowe Pinnacle.

Pinnacle Meadow is considered a statewide significant resource because of its scenic value, recreational opportunities and habitat for a diverse array of wildlife.

Join Jim Shallow of Audubon Vermont for a walk through open meadow land and forest ranging from 1200 to 2300 feet in elevation for an opportunity to see several bird species that make these different natural communities their home.

Carpooling is encouraged. Please meet at 7:30 AM at the Stowe Land Trust office: 699 South Main Street (behind the Tailor Shop).

USFWS Digital Library System



The *Benefit Bake* is Back!

Once Again **Pie in the Sky** is showing its commitment to conservation in Stowe by donating 100% of their profits on all pizzas to **Stowe Land Trust**. On Thursday, May 15, **Pie in the Sky** will sponsor this deliciously appealing all day event. All you have to do is eat pizza!

Gather the family, call your friends, have a pizza pie eating contest, because the more pizza you eat the more **Stowe Land Trust** will earn.

Steve and Cindy Berson are challenging us to eat pizza to show we share their commitment to land conservation—so don't let them down!

Join us on May 15th to indulge in some pizza and raise money to support Stowe Land Trust's land conservation efforts.



When: Thursday, May 15

Where: Pie in the Sky

Why: 100% of all pizza sales will be donated to **Stowe Land Trust**.

Check out our calendar on the back of this newsletter for more Stowe Land Trust events being held in 2008.



2007 Annual Report

Stowe Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation of scenic, recreational, and productive farm and forest lands for the benefit of the greater Stowe community.

R.A. Howard @ USF A-NRCS PLANTS Database

Land Protection



With assistance from the Morristown Conservation Commission, The Nature Conservancy and VHCB, Stowe Land Trust's 2007 land conservation efforts resulted in the acquisition of a conservation easement that guarantees the pristine nature of one of the most unique bogs in Northern Vermont. This project marked Stowe Land Trust's first direct partnership with The Nature Conservancy. 18.5 acres of bog adjacent to Joe's Pond in Morristown and 10.5 acres of high quality agricultural land were protected as a result of this easement.

Wetland natural communities, such as bogs, serve important functions in the landscape. Wetland complexes maintain water quality in area waterways by trapping sediment and filtering pollutants. Additionally, while wetlands make up a small portion of Vermont's land base, they provide habitat necessary to the survival of innumerable fish and wildlife species.

Stowe Land Trust thanks its partners and the original owners, Andre and Marthe Valcour, for helping secure the permanent protection of this special place.

Stewardship



Conservation easements are forever. With each easement, Stowe Land Trust accepts the responsibility to protect land and its conservation values in perpetuity. Our stewardship program is designed to make sure we meet our responsibility for each conservation easement over time. There are a number of specific components to SLT's stewardship program. Below is a small sample of the day-to-day activities that we plan for in the course of a year:

Coordinate volunteers for trail work days—Arrange for snowplowing in winter and brush-hogging in summer— Organize annual monitoring visits to all properties—Provide technical assistance to conservation easement landowners—Facilitate transfers of land to new owners—Develop trail maps— Seek grant funding for special projects— Write baseline documentation reports for new properties— Take photographs of protected lands—Respond to interest groups inquiries about allowed uses of conserved lands...

These activities reflect Stowe Land Trust's commitment to strong relationships with the community, conservation easement landowners and the natural environment.

Community



Several events are held throughout the year to engage the community in their natural surroundings. Stowe Land Trust's goal is to offer a variety of events that encourage people to explore the outdoors, provide fun learning opportunities, and a chance to gather with neighbors.

The "In from the Cold" winter speaker series consisted of four well attended talks on topics ranging from sustainable rice farming in Bali to tales from the sugar shack with Burr Morse.

Lew and Audrey Coty, owners of Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm, hosted a sugar on snow party in March.

Birding with Audubon VT brought nearly 40 participants out to Joe's Pond one early morning in June.

Stowe Land Trust celebrated its 20th anniversary with friends and supporters at a dinner at Stowe Mountain Resort with author, Chris Bohjalian.

Volunteer work days at Wiessner Woods and the Mill Trail property were very productive.

Membership & Fundraising



Stowe Land Trust's success relies entirely upon membership, contributions, grants and special events. Thank you for confirming the importance of our mission with your financial support and taking time to attend one of our fun community events. We extend our sincere thanks to you and look forward to your support in 2008.

Special events at Pie in the Sky, McCarthy's, and the 8th Annual Golf Tournament contributed \$38,500 to the 2007 operating budget. Stowe Land Trust's membership program had several notable highlights. First, 58% of members renewed from 2006 and 15% joined again after missing a year or two. 21% of renewing members increased their gift amount with a net increase of \$12,345. New members comprised 12% of memberships during this past year. These gifts were given by 912 individuals, families, and businesses marking our 10th consecutive year of increased membership! Special thanks to our finance and development committees for their guidance directing the growth and stability of our organization.

SLT's Membership Cycle:

Your membership to Stowe Land Trust corresponds with the calendar year. Membership dues received after November 1, will be applied to the following member year.

Development Committee

Leslie Gauff, Chair
Kevin D'Arcy
Gerry Griffin

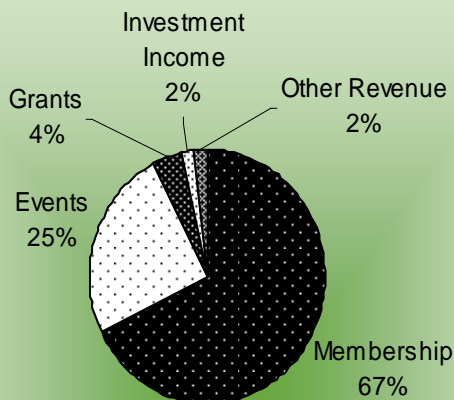
David Jaqua
Ashley Sargent
Peggy Smith

Finance Committee

David Jaqua, Chair
Gaetano Vicinelli
Charlie Berry
Andrew Woods

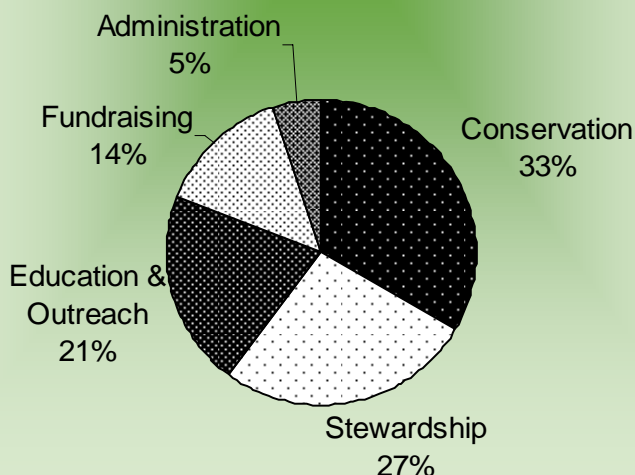
Operating Revenue

\$154,321



Operating Expenses

\$160,041



2007 Financial Highlights

Stowe Land Trust experienced a tremendous amount of growth in 2007. The small deficit reflected in operating can be attributed to the addition of one and half staff persons and a change in office space resulting from increased staff resources. The benefits of added staff have already become apparent, allowing SLT to grow its conservation and stewardship programs as well as generate more community involvement through events and enhancement of our membership program.

Funds received for land protection during 2007 were used to acquire Joe's Pond in Morristown and will be used for the river corridor easement on the Little River which will be closing in the near future. See the cover story for more information about this land protection project.

2007 Restricted Accounts Summary

Income

Investment	\$ 20,924
Land Protection	\$190,960
Stewardship	\$ 13,800
Total	\$225,684

Expenses

Land Protection	\$162,915
Stewardship	\$ 8,569
Total	\$171,484

Conservation Stewards: Fun Summer Volunteering!

Annual monitoring of conserved lands takes you to the fringes of the spectacular properties protected by Stowe Land Trust, where volunteers have the opportunity to get to know the forest beyond the trail and the outer limits of meadows otherwise seen from the road. To happen upon a unique rock formation, waterfall or rare view of a prominent peak while conducting these visits, it is easy to feel as though you were the first one there.

Stowe Land Trust works with volunteer stewards to conduct the critically important task of monitoring each of the 25 properties protected by SLT in the last two decades. As stewards, these volunteers serve as ambassadors for Stowe Land Trust, ensuring the conservation purposes of the easement are upheld while cultivating a positive relationship with landowners.

Volunteer stewards have several important responsibilities, including: visiting conserved property at least once annually, monitoring boundary and trail



View from meadow on DuMont property owned by SLT

conditions if necessary, looking for changes in land use on and adjacent to conserved land, and completing a monitoring report to document their observations. Currently, there are 3 properties available to those interested in serving as a volunteer steward:



Stewardship

A combination of active dairy farm and forest land, the 180 acre **Bouchard Farm** located north of Luce Hill Road with the corresponding 16 acre **Landmark Meadow** across Rte 108, was protected in 1998 for its diverse conservation values.

The **DuMont** property, adjacent to Mt. Mansfield State Forest along the Moscow Road and owned by Stowe Land Trust, is a 47-acre forested property with areas of open meadow and the Little River running along the northern boundary.

The **Nichols Gateway** property is a highly visible 37 acre field adjacent to Nichols Lodge on Rte 100 where the annual antique car show is held.

If you are interested in volunteering as a steward for these special places, please contact Stowe Land Trust at (802) 253-7221.

Gardening Protects Water Quality

With the support of its members, Stowe Land Trust works hard to protect our natural resources in the Stowe area through land conservation. By protecting important landscapes we maintain the quality of our water resources as well. For gardeners, there's a new type of garden that not only looks beautiful, but it also helps mitigate detrimental impacts on the environment.

It's called a rain garden and it's specifically designed to capture rainfall and snowmelt (otherwise known as stormwater). Stormwater running off driveways, roofs, and lawns is washed into nearby waterways bringing with it pollutants such as oil and grease from cars, animal waste and lawn fertilizers.

Creating a rain garden is an easy way for homeowners to make a difference. The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District is developing a VT specific manual covering all the details necessary to locate and install a rain garden on your property. It even provides a plant list and several sample planting plans to assist landowners.

© Alden Pellet Download a free copy: www.vacd.org/winooski

Join Us On The Trail!

Wiessner Woods Work Day
Saturday, June 7, 9 AM-12 PM



Each year in June Stowe Land Trust holds a work day at Wiessner Woods to commemorate National Trails Day. National Trails Day was started to increase the awareness of community trails but also to provide a helping hand to organizations responsible for maintaining trails.

Wiessner Woods was donated to Stowe Land Trust in 1993 by Moo Moo Wiessner and her children Andrew and Polly in honor of the late Fritz Wiessner. The nearly 80-acre property is accessed from Edson Hill Road and offers several different hiking trails to visitors.

Join us on Saturday, June 7th to continue the trail and bridge maintenance necessary to keep this popular trail system in great shape. Be sure to wear work clothes, sturdy shoes, and work gloves. As in past years, lunch will be provided, so please register: 802-253-7221.

~We look forward to seeing you on the trails~

One of my favorite spring ephemerals with a unique adaptation to survival this early in the season is Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). Bloodroot is a white flower with 8 to 12 daisy like petals and a large broad leaf. In order to protect the flower from cold the leaf is wrapped around the blossom to help trap warm air.

A partial list of other plants considered spring ephemerals include, trout lily, columbine, several different colored trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit, spring beauty, foamflower, Canada mayflower and dutchman's breeches (a relative of the wild bleeding heart).

As Stowe Land Trust's field season approaches and stewardship activities send me to all corners of our conserved lands, I look forward to the exhilaration of wandering into a yellow carpet of trout lily, or glimpsing columbine flaunting its delicate red blossoms from cliff edges.

Stowe Land Trust's conserved properties often have natural resource values making them ideal places to search for wildflowers. I encourage visitors to Wiessner Woods to explore the Hardwood Ridge Trail in search of trout lily and trillium. The rich landscape surrounding Joe's Pond and wetland complex is likely to host several striking species including foamflower, jack-in-the-pulpit and dutchman's breeches. Please enjoy the flowers in their natural setting, leave them to seed for future wildflower enthusiasts to celebrate.

Whether it is their fleeting appearance, or my starved senses that send me wandering in the woods each spring, my yard will have to wait until June. I look forward to seeing you in the woods.

~Rebecca Washburn is Stowe Land Trust's Assistant Director.

Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.



Bloodroot

Spring's Earliest Wildflowers

There are many reasons to celebrate the arrival of Spring here in Vermont. The sun has regained its warmth, days are longer, and Winter's sterile nature again gives way to the earthy smell emerging from beneath the blanket of snow. Most people happy to be outside in shirt-sleeves, can be found puttering in their yards doing their spring cleaning. At my house, however, the rake and gardening tools remain where they were stored last autumn. As early as April, I pack up my wildflower guides and camera and head for south-facing hillsides in search of the season's first wildflowers.

Spring ephemerals, as their name suggests, are the first splashes of color to appear in contrast with the brown leaf-littered forest floor and are gone before leaves have fully emerged in the tree canopy. They begin to appear in April in warmer regions and on slopes with a lot of southern exposure. Spring ephemerals flower, produce seeds and die back by June completing their above ground life-cycle in about two months.

This unique group of plants is well adapted to flourishing this early in the growing season. The life-cycle of spring ephemerals is timed with the leafing in of the over-story in order to take full advantage of sunlight streaming through to the forest floor and the abundance of nutrients from decomposing leaves and other debris from the previous autumn. Indicative of this time of year, there are few other plant species and fewer pollinators. It is no coincidence then, that flowers produced by spring ephemerals are striking not simply because of their early appearance. Flowers are unusually showy and often have adapted special features to attract or accommodate pollinators.

Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.

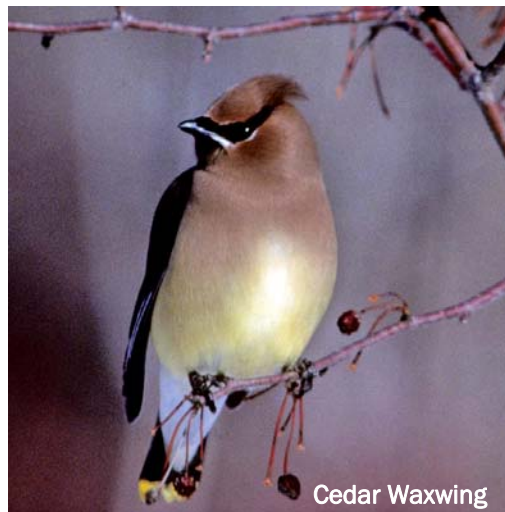


Trout Lily

2008 Events Calendar

Stowe Land Trust holds events in the community to work together to maintain trails, encourage exploration of our natural environment, increase awareness of conservation issues, and raise money to support its mission. For updates on events listed below, please check our website or the local newspaper. For more information, please call SLT at (802) 253-7221.

Stowe Land Trust thanks these generous donors for their support of the Green Flea Market!



USFWS Digital Library System

May 10, Saturday, 7:30 AM

Birding with VT Audubon

Join Jim Shallow from Audubon VT for a morning bird walk at Pinnacle Meadow. Space is limited. Call our office for a spot.

May 15, Thursday, All Day

Pie in the Sky Benefit Bake

Stop in for lunch and dinner because Pie in the Sky is donating 100% of their profits on pizza to Stowe Land Trust.

May 24, Saturday, 8AM—3PM

Green Flea Market

Reserve a space at this fun event to get your spring cleaning done while supporting a great cause. Or, stop in to shop and have lunch.

June 7, Saturday, 9AM—12PM

Wiessner Woods Work Day

Join SLT for the annual work day in celebration of National Trails Day. Please register so we can order the correct number of lunches.

August, Date and Time TBA

Golf Tournament & Calcutta

Traditionally held in the first week of August, the 9th Annual SLT Golf Tournament will be at the West Hill Golf Course. Watch for details coming soon.

September 13, Saturday, 9AM

Mill Trail Cabins Work Day

Help Stowe Land Trust with renovations of the historic Mill Trail cabins.

November 1, Saturday

Stowe Land Trust Art Auction

Be a part of this premier social event at Stoweflake Mountain Resort and Spa. Look for more details in the next *Mountain Views*.

Stowe Land Trust thanks these local businesses for their ongoing support!



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On the corner of Main



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Mountain Views is published quarterly by Stowe Land Trust as a benefit for SLT members. SLT is a membership supported, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of scenic, recreational, and productive farm and forest lands for the benefit of the greater Stowe community. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows.

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