

Mountain Views

News from Stowe Land Trust

Spring/Summer 2014

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Going Local: Conserving our agricultural heritage and cultivating a future in local food

“NO FARMS NO FOOD” is a powerful (if not somewhat distressing) slogan coined by the American Farmland Trust. The short, simple phrase asks us to stop and ponder—“what would happen if

the farms closed?” Another, possibly more important question might be “where did my last meal come from?” Setting aside those questions, and ignoring for a minute the complicated, disconnected nature of our food system, our culture is arguably shaped by food—whether we grow it, shop for it, prepare it, or all or none of the above, each one of us depends on regular consumption of food. Food matters.

As the new Executive Director of Stowe Land Trust (SLT), I have enjoyed learning about the history of conservation efforts in Stowe, and thinking about the priorities for the future. In the late 1980s, the protection of the Mayo Farm was SLT’s first project; the risk of losing this iconic farm to development spurred the community into action, and in fact was the key factor in the formation of SLT. After 27 years and the completion of 29 land protection projects, this

passion for and commitment to agriculture still inspires us. Further, it seems we have reached a critical point in time, and the choices we make today could have a huge impact on our future.

In the past decade, we have seen an agricultural re-awakening that has reversed a long-term decline—according to the most recent census, the number of farms in Vermont increased from 6,984 in 2007 to 7,338 in 2012. While there are many factors involved in this shift, land trusts and land conservation have been instrumental: by offering an alternative to the conversion of agricultural land to development, and providing access to affordable farmland for new farmers.

Of course, a myriad of other factors play into the reversing trend. Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from, and are making conscious choices to eat food grown closer to home. The “localvore” movement, started in California in 2004, has taken hold in Vermont, and most recently Vermont was ranked first in the nation according to availability and consumption of local food. Communities and governments recognize the

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Young heifers set out to graze.



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Kristen Sharpless,
Conservation Program Manager
Erin Bruhns,
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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.

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STOWE LAND TRUST

From the Board Chair



Spring is a magical time in Stowe and is especially welcome after the long, hard winter we just endured, or enjoyed, depending upon your outlook. Those who glided through Kirchner Woods and Wiessner Woods on fresh powder or snowshoed past Mill Trail Cabin to Bingham Falls did more enjoying than enduring. We can thank Stowe Land Trust for those opportunities.

As the trees bud and the meadows green up, heed Robert Frost's advice and enjoy the moment:

A Prayer in Spring

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

No matter the season, we all benefit from the special places that SLT has conserved during its 27-year history. I urge you to explore all that Stowe has to offer this spring and summer. Be sure to join us on one of our monthly outings (see back page) where you'll meet other like-minded folks, and maybe find a place you never knew about or see a favorite place from a new perspective.

Speaking of new perspectives - it has been a real pleasure working with Caitrin over the past 5 months. She's a breath of fresh air, and has been working diligently to ensure SLT remains the excellent organization it was when she stepped in as Executive Director.

We are also excited to welcome the newest member of the SLT team, Kristen Sharpless of Stowe, as our new Conservation Program Manager. Skip to page 7 to learn more about Kristen and all of the talents she will bring to Stowe Land Trust.

It is truly an honor serving as SLT's Chair, and I look forward to working together to ensure Stowe remains a special place for us all.

Comment Period Now Open

After going through the Land Trust Alliance's accreditation program* we were a stronger organization. Five years later we're due for renewal and invite you to comment on our renewal application.

Please submit your comments by August 26, 2014.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the LTA, invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending renewal applications. Comments must relate to how Stowe Land Trust complies with national quality standards. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/indicator-practices>.

To submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.



*The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever.

Going Local - continued

“For the last five seasons, we have had a garden plot at the community garden at Mayo Farm. Paying the equivalent of dinner out, we received a freshly tilled garden plot, access to gardening tools and water. This resource has been invaluable to us, and we are so very grateful! It has also been a community experience—it’s been fun to walk around and see what everyone else is growing and how they’re growing it.”

-Shelly Martin, Stowe

importance of agriculture to the health of our local economy and to maintaining a working landscape, and have focused increasing resources to supporting local agriculture.

Therefore, considering that: 1) food & farms are critical aspects of our communities, culture, landscape, economy and personal well-being; 2) farms are extremely vulnerable to real estate pressure and land conversion; 3) conservation is a key tool in sustaining and expanding farmland and farm opportunities; and 4) demand for local food is increasing, I believe our efforts to conserve agricultural land in Stowe are more important and relevant than ever.

The Face of Farming in Stowe Today: Challenges & opportunities

Following state and national trends, through the 1980s Stowe experienced a steady decline in the number of farms and farmland. However, during the past two decades both the number of active farms and the total acreage under farm management has stabilized. While agriculture continues to shape the face of the town, currently only four working dairy farms remain. All family owned and operated, the active dairy farms are owned by the following families: the Pikes, the Percys, the Ricketsons and the Morrills. There are also a few other small farms in operation, including the Sage Goat Farm Dairy operated by the Pindell family and the Kaiser Farm in Nebraska Valley.

The Percy family farm is unquestionably the most prominent operation in town. Paul Percy, owner of the farm, was recognized as the 2014 “Conservationist of the Year” by the

Stowe Conservation Commission for his long standing commitment to land stewardship and agriculture in Stowe. Paul was born on the farm, and began working the land alongside his father as a youth. He started shipping milk in 1965, and realized early on that in order to sustain a viable farm operation he would need to expand. He recognizes that conservation has been an important tool in helping him to acquire land and access the capital necessary to sustain his farm operation.

Today Paul milks 500 cows, and his farm encompasses more than 1,000 acres of owned land; 460 acres of which has been conserved by Vermont Land Trust and Stowe Land Trust. In addition to land he owns, he leases many acres throughout the town, including the agricultural land of the Mayo Farm. Many agree that without Paul’s active farm operation, Stowe’s landscape would have a very different character. His son Ryan studied agriculture at the University of Vermont and currently works alongside his father to manage the farm. He hopes Ryan will take the reins in the future—continuing their family farm legacy into the third generation.

Supporting our Agricultural Heritage: Conservation as a key tool

The 460 acres of conserved land currently owned and operated by Paul Percy is located mainly at three farmsteads: the Tinker and the Ware Farms on Route 100 north of town, and the Bouchard Farm located off Luce Hill Road. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) provided funding for each of these projects, and is an important source of funding to support land conservation throughout the state. Land trusts and other conservation organizations, including the Stowe Land Trust, can apply for funding through

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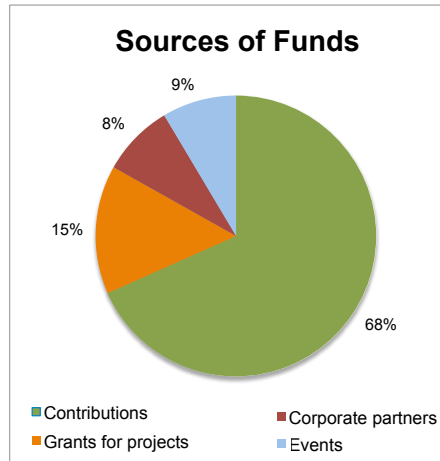
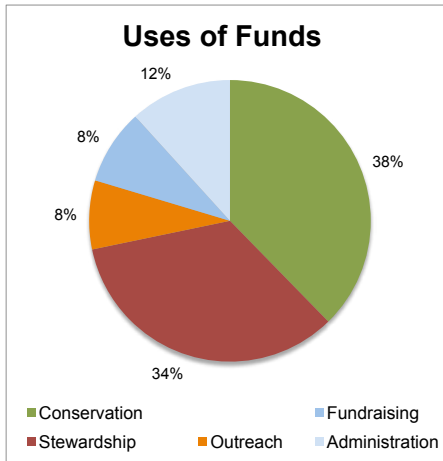
Stowe Community Garden on Mayo Farm.



AG BY THE NUMBERS

- Farms in VT in 1900: **32,000**
- Farms in VT in 2007: **6,984**
- Farms in VT in 2012: **7,338**
- VHCB \$\$ investment in Ag Conservation in VT, 2013: **\$4.2M**
- VT’s “Localvore” Rank in US in 2014: **#1**
- Conserved acres of prime & statewide significant ag soils in Stowe: **~650**
- Dairy farms in VT in 1990: **2,370**
- Dairy farms in VT in 2008: **1,097**

Annual Report FY'13



Consolidated Statement Of Financial Position

For the Year ended September 30, 2013

<u>Assets</u>	
Cash & Other Assets	\$94,060
Investments	\$565,167
Building in progress (Mill Trail Cabin Restoration)	\$59,790
Land	\$2,125,040
Total	<u>\$2,844,057</u>

<u>Liabilities</u>	
Accounts payable	\$9,535
Accrued expenses	\$6,252
Total	<u>\$15,787</u>

<u>Net Assets</u>	
Beginning Net Assets	
Unrestricted	\$291,831
Temporarily Restricted	\$170,659
Permanently Restricted	\$2,165,540
Change in Net Assets	\$200,240
Ending Net Assets	<u>\$2,828,270</u>

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$2,844,057</u>
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SLT's financial records are reviewed annually by Marckres, Norder & Company, Inc., Certified Public Accountants. A complete copy of the annual financial review may be obtained by written request to SLT.

To Our Supporters:

Stowe Land Trust (SLT) has worked to conserve the most special places in Stowe since 1987—protecting spectacular viewsheds, extensive trail networks, and the working farms and forests that are Vermont's heritage. This important work has been sustained primarily by the generous support of individual donors. Thank you for your support!

SLT's current Board of Directors is a diverse group of 22 community members who, in partnership with staff, are dedicated to putting your dollars to work. SLT is continuously engaged in a broad range of land protection activities, and stewards 24 conservation easements. SLT also owns and manages 5 properties—Wiessner Woods, Kirchner Woods, DuMont, Mill Trail and Page Forest—all of which have public trails.

Going Local - continued

VHCB to support eligible land conservation projects (projects must meet a certain set of criteria). Federal funding through the Farm Bill is also available for eligible projects.

To ensure that these lands will always be available to active farmers, farm conservation easements often include an "affordability option". This means that when a conserved farm is put up for sale, the land trust reserves the right to purchase the farm at its agriculture value. This allows the land trust to offer the farm for sale to a new farmer at a reasonable price.

While conservation is a key tool in maintaining a working landscape, it is not the only tool. Vermont Land Trust has an exciting program

called the "Farmland Access Program". This program connects eligible farmers (those with farming experience and a good business plan) with landowners willing to lease their land for a reasonable price. Jon Ramsey, director of the program describes its value and importance: "Gaining access to high quality, affordable farmland is one of the most difficult obstacles for beginning farmers and expanding agricultural operations. The challenge is especially acute for enterprises that depend on being near Vermont's economic growth centers—areas where land values remain strong even in the current economic climate." Certainly this is the case in Stowe, where there is likely a strong market for agricultural products, but where the cost of land is at a premium. The Farmland Access Program is a statewide program, and could be a great complement to Stowe Land Trust's work to permanently protect farmland.

If you are interested in learning more about Stowe Land Trust's conservation program, and/or want to know more about conserving your land, please contact Caitrin Maloney, Executive Director, at (802) 253-7221 or caitrin@stowelandtrust.org.

WHAT'S A LOCALVORE?

A "Locavore" (or "localvore" as commonly used in the eastern US) is a person who actively chooses foods grown within a 100 mile radius of their home. Localvores contend that locally grown, in-season foods are fresher, tastier and more nutritious than those that have been shipped from afar. By supporting local agriculture, localvores hope to boost local economies and minimize environmental impacts.

Join The Real-World Treasure Hunt: Let's Go Geocaching

What Is Geocaching?

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.

Getting Started

Things you will need: a GPS receiver or GPS-enabled smartphone with a geocaching app (available for both iPhone and Android, etc.) and a basic membership on geocaching.com.

A Typical Cache Excursion

- Load the car with the kids, the family dog, and some small trading items (called “swag”) to put into the cache.
- Dress sensibly for the trail and weather conditions, and bring a snack and beverage.
- Enter the cache coordinates into your GPS unit or smartphone.
- Drive to the trailhead, turn on your unit, and tell it to “GO” to the coordinates.
- Indicators on your unit will tell you the direction to walk and the distance to the cache.
- Use existing trails until you get reasonably close to the cache, and then you may have to go a short distance off the trail.
- Once you find the container, open it up and sign the log sheet inside.
- Trade items if you like, but keep them family friendly, and don't put food in the containers, as this may attract animals.
- Put the cache back, being careful to leave it as you found it.
- When you get home, log into your geocaching.com account, and log your find. Describe your hike and adventures finding the cache, but don't tell exactly where you found it, as that spoils the hunt for others.

GEOCACHING.COM

Geocaching.com is the headquarters for geocaching. A basic membership allows you to search for geocaches and log your finds online. Once you sign in to geocaching.com, you can search by town or zip code to find a list of caches. When you click on a cache, you see a cache description page containing the coordinates along with other useful information. Caches are given difficulty and terrain ratings from 1 to 5. A difficulty 1 hide is pretty obvious, while a difficulty 5 rating is very tricky. The description usually has a few icons known as “attributes”. These will tell you more about the cache, such as whether it's available in winter. Following is a description of the cache, which describes what you will experience if you decide to attempt this cache.

Geocaches On SLT-Conserved Properties

(search for these by name on geocaching.com)

Bingham Falls: Bingham Falls Trail Head

Cady Hill Forest: Cady Hill Parking, Log It, Knife Edge, Cute

Crawford: Gray's Green Gallivant

DuMont: DuMont Meadow

Kirchner Woods: It Wood Be Kirchner, Sweet Kirchner, To The Top, Every Sugarhouse Needs a Sugarbush

Mill Trail: Old Blacksmith Shop, Summer Love Incarnate

Pinnacle Meadow: Pinnacle Parking, Pinnacle Meadow

Sunset Rock: Stowe Sunset View, Take a Break – Get a View

Wiessner Woods: Night of Surprises (a night only cache), Wiessner Meadow View, Edson Hill Pasture View



Cindy Gray (aka cwgray on geocaching.com) is an avid geocacher and has hidden over 100 caches in Vermont and New Hampshire. Cindy helped co-write this article and took Erin out to find her first cache in Cady Hill Forest.

Pinnacle Society

STOWE
LAND TRUST
*Pinnacle
Society*

Your leadership is an inspiration to others who are passionate about protecting our natural world. Thank you!

Preservationist

Phil Branton and Ellen Lazarus - In memory of Offie Soldin
The Chingos Foundation
Bill and Debbie Davis
Bowie and Helen Duncan
Diane and Andreas Halvorsen
James and Lisa LaTorre
Tortimaki Foundation per request of Timothy and Nancy Taussig
Topnotch Resort and Spa
Trapp Family Lodge
Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli
Roger M. and Jill J. Witten

Conservationist

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Italics denotes Life Members

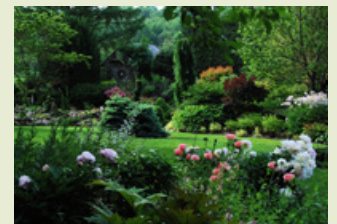
Pinnacle Society donations received after May 12th will be recognized in the fall/winter issue of Mountain Views. Please let us know if we listed your name incorrectly.



Local expert, Kate Carter, leads a wildflower walk at Kirchner Woods.

An event just for you, our Pinnacle Society members!

Private Garden Tour at the Award-Winning Cady's Falls Nursery
Sunday, July 13, 2014
4:30 – 6:30pm *Details to follow*



The Pinnacle Society was created to recognize and appreciate the people who help us conserve Stowe's spectacular landscapes and natural resources for future generations.

Pinnacle Society members give annually at the \$1,000 level or above. Their combined support provides us with the capacity to cultivate new conservation projects and fulfill stewardship obligations on our permanently conserved lands.

As a Pinnacle Society member you receive:

- Exceptional recognition in our publications
- Invitations to exclusive outings and events
- Special reports from our Executive Director
- An open invitation to visit a conserved property, accompanied by a SLT staff member

If you would like to learn more about or join the Pinnacle Society, contact Executive Director, Caitrin Maloney: caitrin@stowelandtrust.org or (802) 253-7221.

Our New Trusted Team Members



Caitrin Maloney

Caitrin was welcomed as the Executive Director in December 2013.

Caitrin is a native Vermonter, raised amongst the peaks of the Northfield Range in Central Vermont. Her deep connection with the landscape and the people of Vermont stems from her roots; as a youth she enjoyed gardening and cooking with her grandmother, while her love for outdoor recreation was fostered through running, hiking, skiing and mountain biking with her parents.

She completed her undergraduate work at the University of Vermont, earning a BS in Environmental Science. After graduating, she was hired to manage the Lake Champlain Sea Grant/UVM Extension Watershed Alliance. During this time she enrolled as a master's student in UVM's Community Development and Applied Economics Department. Her applied research involved extensive travel to Taulabé Honduras, where she worked with more than 20 small villages to develop and implement innovative approaches to rural drinking water management.

Caitrin went on to serve as the Executive Director of Friends of the Mad River (FMR). At FMR she played a leadership role in the Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership, a unique collaboration with Vermont Land Trust and the Mad River Valley Planning District. An active community member, she also served as co-chair of the Warren Conservation Commission, and helped bring the Four Winds nature program to the Warren School.

An avid recreationalist, Caitrin enjoys all things outside. Her love of backcountry skiing and off-trail adventuring takes her deep into Vermont's woods as frequently as possible.

Kristen Sharpless

Kristen joined SLT as Conservation Program Manager in April.

After coming to summer camp in the Green Mountains as a teenager, Kristen studied biology and education in Pennsylvania, taught sailing and marine studies on a wooden schooner, and led field science programs in the Colorado Rockies before finding her way back to Vermont ten years ago.

She graduated from the University of Vermont's Field Naturalist Program in 2007 and then worked at Audubon Vermont as a teacher-naturalist, education program coordinator and, most recently, conservation biologist for Audubon's Forest Bird Initiative. Through her work at Audubon Vermont, as a consulting ecologist, and as a volunteer on town boards, Kristen has assisted Vermont landowners, foresters, and municipalities with land planning and

stewardship projects, which continues to be a large part of her job at Stowe Land Trust.

Kristen lives in Stowe with her family and is likely to be seen walking to work, digging in her garden, buying dark chocolate at Laughing Moon, or enjoying après ski with friends.



Krista Battles

Krista is SLT's 2014 Summer Naturalist. A native of New Jersey, Krista came to Vermont as an undergraduate at UVM in 1998.

Four years later, she completed her undergraduate degree in English and Social Anthropology, and soon after moved to Hawaii to explore new landscapes. Upon her return, Krista entered into a grad program at Rutgers State University while living in Philadelphia. She completed her graduate education in 2008 and began teaching composition at both community and private colleges.

Her love of the outdoors led her to break with urban life, and she reentered academia in 2013, graduating at the top of her class with an A.S. in Environmental Science. She has since worked for the NY Park Systems and the NY Dept of Environmental Conservation as a Naturalist and Outdoor Educator.

Krista and her husband have recently returned to VT to raise their son among the Green Mountains. As SLT's Summer Naturalist Krista will spend the season leading educational walks, overseeing trail maintenance projects, and sharing the wonders of SLT's many conserved properties.

Off the SLT trails, Krista can be found exploring the forest behind her Waterbury home on foot, snowshoes, or skis. She is an avid runner, an experimental cook, and is fortunate to have friends and family close at hand. Whatever the day's adventure, she is likely to have her son on her back and her trusted mutt in tow.

SLT'S SUMMER NATURALIST PROGRAM

Interested in learning more about what's flying, growing, and swimming at the Mill Trail property or about the land's rich history as a hill farm, mill site, and early ski destination?

Stop by the cabin on Saturdays throughout the summer and meet Krista, SLT's Summer Naturalist. The Summer Naturalist Program provides learning opportunities – especially for children – that inspire local citizens to engage with their natural world and foster a love and appreciation for the land.

Look for details on guided walks, children's activities, and other fun opportunities on our website soon! www.stowelandtrust.org

What's Going On? SLT Outings and Events

Mill Trail Workday & Summer Naturalist Kick-Off

Saturday, June 7, 2014, 9am – 1pm

Mill Trail Property

It's National Trail Day! Help with spring trail work, meet our new Summer Naturalist, Krista, and check out the Mill Trail Cabin. Lunch provided! Please RSVP info@stowelandtrust.org or (802) 253-7221.

Craft Brew Race

Saturday, June 14, 2014, Noon – 4pm

Stoweflake Mountain Resort

A relaxed 5k for runners and walkers featuring a craft brew festival at the finish line for all 21+ participants. A portion of the proceeds from the event will be donated to SLT to support the work we do. More info and sign up: www.craftbrewraces.com/stowe

Cady Hill Forest – Hike or Bike

Saturday, June 21, 2014, 9am – 11am

With over 11 miles of trails easily accessible from the Mountain Road, Cady Hill Forest is a fabulous community resource. Recent upgrades to sections of trail have made this network fun for all ability levels and multiple user groups.



For more information or a full list of our events and outings visit: www.stowelandtrust.org/newsevents

Adams Camp – Hike or Bike

Saturday, July 19, 2014, 9am – 11am

Kimmer's Trail has been touted as one of the best mountain bike trails in the east. Come and see for yourself. Starting from the Adams Camp Bridge, we'll ride the popular Hardy's Haul→Kimmer's loop. Rather walk? Hikers are also welcome. Stick around for a cool beverage and a dip in the Ranch Brook.

Hike Stowe Pinnacle via Pinnacle Meadow

Saturday, August 16, 2014, 9am – 11am

Join us on this classic hike to the summit of the Stowe Pinnacle via Pinnacle Meadow. This quick, moderate hike affords some of the best views around, and if we're lucky a nice, cooling breeze will await us on the bald summit.

Annual Celebration

Sunday, September 7, 2014, 1pm – 5pm

Save the date!

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