

Mountain Views

WINTER 2026



STCWE
LAND TRUST

Dear friends,

Connection is at the heart of conservation—connection to nature, to land, and to community.

That's why I'm excited to announce the three brand new projects outlined in this edition of Mountain Views. Together, Muddy Moose, Stagecoach Meadows, and North Hill Forest reflect the incredible opportunity we have to use conservation as a collaborative tool for protecting what we love about this valley, while making it affordable and accessible for people who want to live and work here.

- ▶ **Muddy Moose:** This project in Morristown protects one of the area's most beautiful scenic gorges, opens an extensive trail network for public access, and conserves a 150-acre forest vitally important to flood mitigation. A true conservation trifecta! Additionally, Downstreet Housing & Community Development will renovate the existing short-term rentals on the property into permanently affordable community housing.
- ▶ **Stagecoach Meadows:** Thanks to a generous donor, a beautiful and ecologically important area off Stagecoach Road that encompasses forests, streams, and meadows has been conserved, securing permanent protection for the Catamount and VAST trails that traverse the property. Downstreet will replace the aging outbuildings on the property with new, single-family homes.
- ▶ **North Hill Forest:** Located in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor, this 74-acre parcel moves us an enormous step closer toward keeping this vital wildlife corridor permanently protected.

We're delighted to share that, thanks to your generosity, only one of these projects will require additional funding in 2026! Your past support allowed us to secure the funding needed for Stagecoach Meadows and North Hill Forest, and to close on Muddy Moose, while we fundraise to cover the final costs of the project.

Together, these projects represent over \$7 million in conservation, with just \$250,000 left to raise.

Everyone deserves the chance to build a life in a place they love—and to walk out their door into nature that nourishes them. These projects prove that conservation and community can thrive together, creating a valley where connection to land and affordability aren't competing values, but shared ones.



See you out there,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "T" and "R".

Tom Rogers
Executive Director



STOWE LAND TRUST

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connect
to something
more

Muddy Moose: A Conservation Trifecta in Morristown

A magnificent gorge, extensive hiking and cross-country skiing trails, and a 150-acre forest that buffers downstream communities from flooding. Welcome to Muddy Moose!

For the past 14 years, Muddy Moose's eight tidy cabins have served as a home base for visitors exploring the property's established trails, swimming in the river, or venturing to the nearby villages of Stowe, Hyde Park, Johnson, and Morristown.

This year, those short-term vacation rentals on Cote Hill in Morristown will become single-family homes surrounded by 150 acres of conserved land. The trails, formerly open only to Muddy Moose guests, will be open to the public.

Stowe Land Trust and Downstreet Housing & Community Development have partnered to purchase Muddy Moose. The partnership will conserve 150 priority acres for water quality and flood prevention, placing them under a conservation easement to ensure permanent public access to the property's established trail system. Meanwhile, Downstreet will transform the existing cabins on the remaining 18 acres into affordable, deed-restricted housing for year-round residents.



“

We're excited about what this project means for the community. Muddy Moose protects a beautiful and important piece of land while also creating new opportunities for recreation and housing.”

—Jerry Throne, chair of the Morristown Conservation Commission.



In many areas, access to nature comes at a premium, available only to those who can afford it. Muddy Moose, which is one of the most beautiful pieces of land we've ever conserved, will be open to the public, and enjoyed by both visitors and year-round residents.

—Tom Rogers, Stowe Land Trust.

► Recreation & Community Vitality

With awe-inspiring waterfalls, nearly three-quarter miles of river frontage, and multi-use trails that wind through a forest inhabited only by wildlife, Muddy Moose offers incredible recreational opportunities.

Once conserved, the 150-acre forest that encompasses the trail system will serve residents and visitors in Hyde Park, Morristown, Johnson, and Stowe, and strengthen the region's outdoor recreation economy.

► Conservation & Climate Resilience

Interior forests like the one at Muddy Moose play an important role in regional water quality and flood mitigation. Situated on low-lying land alongside Jacob's Creek and the Lamoille River, floodplain forests naturally absorb fluctuating water volumes while filtering runoff—a critical function in an era of intense storms. The area is considered a high-value climate corridor by The Nature Conservancy and a priority for water quality protection by the State of Vermont.

Additionally, the conservation of this land will protect wildlife habitat for dozens of species, including mink and otter, yellow warblers, wood turtles, and more.

► Permanently Affordable Housing

Mature trees, sweeping views, and wide lawns surround the cabins at Muddy Moose. After being renovated by Downstreet, the 1-3 bedroom cabins currently being operated as short-term rentals will be sold as single-family homes with deed restrictions that ensure long-term community housing.

Will you help conserve Muddy Moose?

With immense gratitude to Downstreet, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, and a number of generous Stowe Land Trust donors, we are very close to meeting our fundraising goal, but we need your help. Your donation to Stowe Land Trust will:

- Enhance outdoor recreation and economic opportunity
- Safeguard an ecologically important forest
- Ensure equitable access to a spectacular natural resource

Stowe Land Trust is responsible for raising an additional \$250,000 to conserve Muddy Moose. Will you help us protect this land from development and ensure public access to the stunning gorge, riverfront, and trails on the property?



*Yes! I want to donate
to Muddy Moose*

stowelandtrust.org/donate





Stagecoach Meadows: The Legacy of Land

Some gifts are too meaningful to go unrecognized, even when the donors choose to remain anonymous—as is the case with the remarkable conservation story of Stagecoach Meadows.

For the past few years, the farmhouse on this 124-acre Morristown property sat quietly—its sweeping views of the Worcester Mountains appreciated only by the deer, birds, and occasional black bear passing through. Though the family's connection to the land remained strong, the adult children had long since moved into their own homes to start families, while the owners had relocated to be near their grandchildren.

When it came time to consider the property's future, the family faced a choice. The land was prime for subdivision, a potentially lucrative option. Instead, they reached out to the Stowe Land Trust to explore conservation.

Their vision was clear: to protect the wildlife, aesthetic, and ecological values of the property; to continue allowing farming in the meadows; and to maintain access for the Catamount and VAST trails that traverse the land. Through conversations that brought Downstreet Housing & Community Development to the table, an even more ambitious solution emerged.

The family decided to gift the entire property to Stowe Land Trust and allow Downstreet to replace the aging outbuildings with deed-restricted, single-family homes that local families could afford. The rest of the property, approximately 115 acres, will be permanently protected through a

conservation easement with the Stowe Land Trust, which will steward the land in perpetuity. Further deepening their impact, proceeds from the sale of the farmhouse itself will support the Land Trust's ongoing conservation work, including the Muddy Moose project.

The result is a powerful legacy: one of the most beautiful properties along Stagecoach Road conserved forever, with thoughtful development that honors both affordability and the natural character of the land.



North Hill Forest: Connecting Shutesville, Protecting Wildlife

Deep in the forests between the Green Mountains and Worcester Range, wildlife moves unseen through a landscape we'll likely never visit. But protecting the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor benefits us all.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of two neighboring landowners and support from The Nature Conservancy, the 74-acre North Hill Forest parcel has been added to a growing patchwork of conserved land in Shutesville. Previously cleared for farming, the land has naturally regenerated into a mature forest that now provides prime wildlife habitat.

North Hill Forest is a priority for conservation because it encompasses a bottleneck in the corridor that wildlife must traverse to move between the two mountain ranges. The Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor is part of the global Staying Connected Initiative, representing the most intact forest connection between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range.

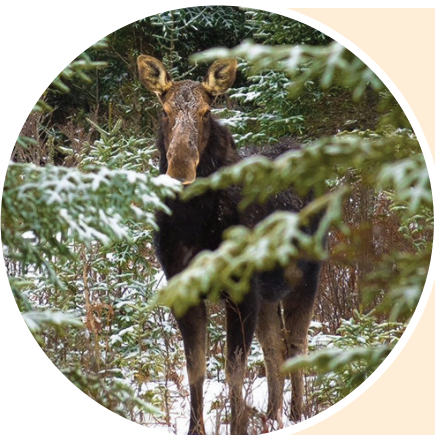
All told, your support of previous projects has conserved nearly 800 acres in Shutesville. Together, we are making progress!

Although most of us will never walk through this wild piece of land ourselves, it will forever be home to the howl of coyotes, the trill of nesting songbirds in spring, and the majestic moose that wander between mountain ranges. Its protection ensures that the forests and mountains surrounding our community remain vibrant, connected, and full of life.



Interested in conserving your land?

Contact Tom Rogers to discuss how you can ensure your land reflects your values for generations to come.
tom@stowelandtrust.org or (802) 253-7221.



Together, Muddy Moose, Stagecoach Meadows, and North Hill Forest represent:

7%

INCREASE IN
CONSERVED ACREAGE

10%

INCREASE IN TRAIL MILEAGE
ON PROTECTED LANDS

Your continued support makes it possible to protect land and support access to recreational opportunities. Thank you!

Your Impact

With your support, we've reached an exciting milestone: **nearly 5,000 acres of conserved land and 60 miles of protected trails**—that's enough to stretch from Stowe to Burlington and back!

As our local communities become more interconnected, Stowe Land Trust has expanded to serve the broader valley, reflecting our shared challenges and opportunities across town lines. Wildlife doesn't recognize political boundaries, and neither should our conservation efforts.

By working together to protect land across the valley, we can lift all communities, ease pressure on popular trailheads, protect wildlife, expand access to nature, and tackle shared challenges around development, affordability, and recreation.

