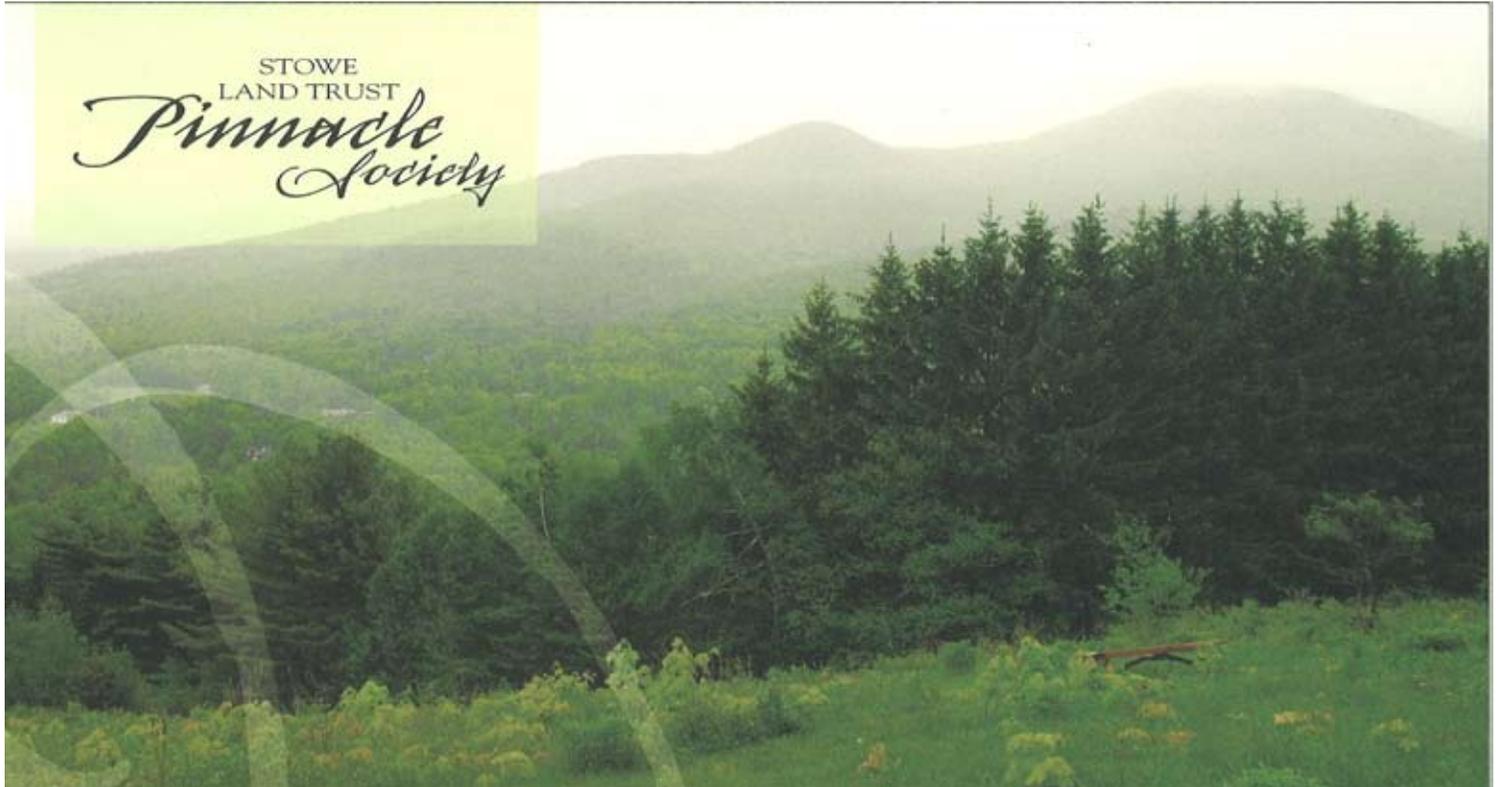


Mountain Views

Quarterly Newsletter of Stowe Land Trust

Fall 2009



Stowe Land Trust Launches Pinnacle Society

As a way to celebrate and appreciate Stowe Land Trust's membership, we are proud to launch a new major donor circle, the Pinnacle Society.

The Pinnacle Society was created to ensure that the conservation of our most spectacular natural landscapes remain intact to inspire future generations. It recognizes donors of \$1,000 or more during SLT's Membership Year (November 1st - October 31st) that support the ongoing mission of Stowe Land Trust.

Your membership dollars literally keep Stowe Land Trust running. Pinnacle Society members are the foundation of our operating fund and provide the critical dollars needed for land negotiations and stewardship.

Your gifts also provide leverage, essential to helping SLT successfully obtain competitive grants to purchase new land and easements and sustain our stewardship program.

As leading donors, Pinnacle Society members are offered unique opportunities to become intimately acquainted with SLT's efforts. You will receive exclusive updates on SLT's work and be invited as honored guests to special events and private tours on SLT properties.

***We invite you to join
in creating a legacy for
the future of Stowe and all
those who cherish
the beauty of Vermont.***

The Pinnacle Society was founded with the knowledge that this generation's passion for the beauty of Stowe will resonate with others who have a deep commitment to protecting our natural world.

Pinnacle Society membership allows us to celebrate the people who have given so much to land conservation, and share with others what a core group of dedicated, conservation minded people can achieve.

For more information about the Pinnacle Society, please contact Heather Furman at 802-253-7221 or visit our website.



Stowe Land Trust
is now on facebook!

"We know the future will outlast us, but I believe that all of us will live on in the future we make."

- Sen. Edward M. Kennedy

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(802) 253-2642 (fax)
www.stowelandtrust.org
info@stowelandtrust.org

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



Elaine Nichols



Andrew Woods

With the arrival of fall, it always strikes us how quickly we turn our attention away from the gardens, lawns, and barbeque, inward, to the home, hearth and kitchen. Most of us have already had our first woodstove fire and put on a pot of homemade soup with oven baked bread. Fall is a time for taking stock, looking at the year past, asking what we did well and appreciating those who have helped us succeed.

It's also a time for making plans, building our reserves and anticipating the challenges of the year ahead. At Stowe Land Trust, we look forward to taking up these challenges and providing the community with more ways to become engaged in our work. Last year SLT formed a Strategic Issues Committee to evaluate our goals for the organization and to engage with our members on their priorities. Many of you participated in the Committee's survey, and in the spirit of taking stock, we'll share with you three things that were revealed from this survey and that we are taking up as our goals for 2010.

First, you've asked us to focus our conservation work primarily on productive farmland, recreational resources, the Route 100 corridor and the Worcester Range. Indeed there are hundreds of acres all over town, and beyond our borders that you drive by every day; places where you walk, bike, or hike that you may think are already protected. There are still farms that could, with the right combination of economics and opportunity seem – to their owners - more viable as housing lots than dairy pastures. So our first goal is to maintain a steady consistent effort to reach out to landowners with the option of land conservation.

Second, you've asked us to continue managing and promoting our conserved lands that have public access and work toward creating greater exposure of these properties. This goal takes the long view, and requires all of us to invest in the work that others have done to see land protected. Eventually this responsibility will be passed to the next generation, but for now, this is our responsibility – for the time that we are here enjoying the beauty of Stowe. One example of this stewardship work has been going on at the Adams Camp property. We've partnered with the Stowe Mountain Bike Club, the Town of Stowe and the von Trapp family to plan nearly 7 miles of new trail. Once built, these trails will be open and accessible to the

public as part of the Vermont Mountain Bike Ride Center (page 6) that's aimed at enhancing the economic vitality in our area.

Third, you've asked us to continue partnering with organizations like Audubon Vermont, the Lamoille Co. Natural Resource Conservation District and others to bring a host of new free and discounted educational programs to the Stowe area. This year we were able to hold many new programs because of these partnerships including a forest management workshop, bird walk, river/invasive species walk, and an education series on bats, biodiesel and the barnyard. We've also partnered with dozens of local area businesses to our mutual benefit and give businesses a way to support us through non-monetary gifts. These partnerships have leveraged the capacity of our organization to extend deeper into the community and do more than what would otherwise be possible with a staff of three.

With your continued support, we look forward to carrying our mission forward into 2010!

Autumn is Hunting Season in Vermont

Youth Deer Weekend
November 7-8

Deer Rifle Season
November 14-29

There are certain precautions that should be taken in order to ensure a safe outing. Remember, you and your pets should wear blaze orange.

For a complete list of Vermont hunting and trapping seasons, see www.fishandwildlife.com

Work Begins on Kirchner Woods Trails

The process of building new trails from scratch is truly rewarding; and it isn't something that many people have the chance to experience. But a thoughtful design and careful layout wasn't always the norm. In many locations, trails emerge out of old logging roads or deer paths and aren't always the best, most sustainable way to get from point "a" to "b". Today, with the help of professionals, we can develop a trail network that is designed to endure over the years and require less maintenance and infrastructure upkeep. Over the life of the trail, it can be more cost-effective to invest in sustainable design than to continuously plan re-routes, mitigate erosion and raise the tread of constantly eroding trails.

In September, Stowe Land Trust received nearly a dozen proposals in response to its Request For Proposals (RFP) for trail planning and development at Kirchner Woods. After a very competitive review process, SLT's Stewardship Committee selected Preserve Land Works and Sustainable Trailworks, llc as consultants on this exciting project. Joe Trudeau and Amber Fields of Preserve Land Works based in Hancock, NH were on the ground within days of being selected. They conducted a comprehensive natural and culture resource inventory, identifying the extent of the historic sugarbush, significant plant populations and natural communities, large and unique trees, and cultural aspects of the property such as an inscribed beech tree with etchings dating to 1935!

Joe and Amber also conducted an assessment of soils on the property – from wetlands to ledge – which provided Hardy Avery of Sustainable Trailworks excellent information to begin his trail layout and design. Hardy's design features a multi-use surfaced trail on the lower portion of the property that will accommodate heavy traffic – bikes, kids, skiers and snowshoers. The trail meanders up to the old sugarhouse – a starting point for a number of other loops on the property. In addition to the existing woods roads, a new single track bike and walking trail loops through the middle of the property. The trails will be signed for summer and winter use allowing users to put together their own unique walk through the property. The top of the property hosts a multi-season loop that explores interesting features such as cliffy ledges and steep glades.

Meanwhile, Stowe Land Trust continues with permitting for the Kirchner Woods parking area. Once permits are in place, SLT will develop a small parking lot on Taber Hill Road that will accommodate up to six cars.

In mid-October, SLT held a series of work days and volunteers came from as far away as Washington, DC to help with the arduous process of clearing the new trail corridor and hauling brush. It's true that many hands make light work, and by the end of the day all the new trails had been cleared. This fall, we'll let things settle down in Kirchner Woods and take some time to ski and snowshoe the corridors this winter to be sure the layout is fun and interest-

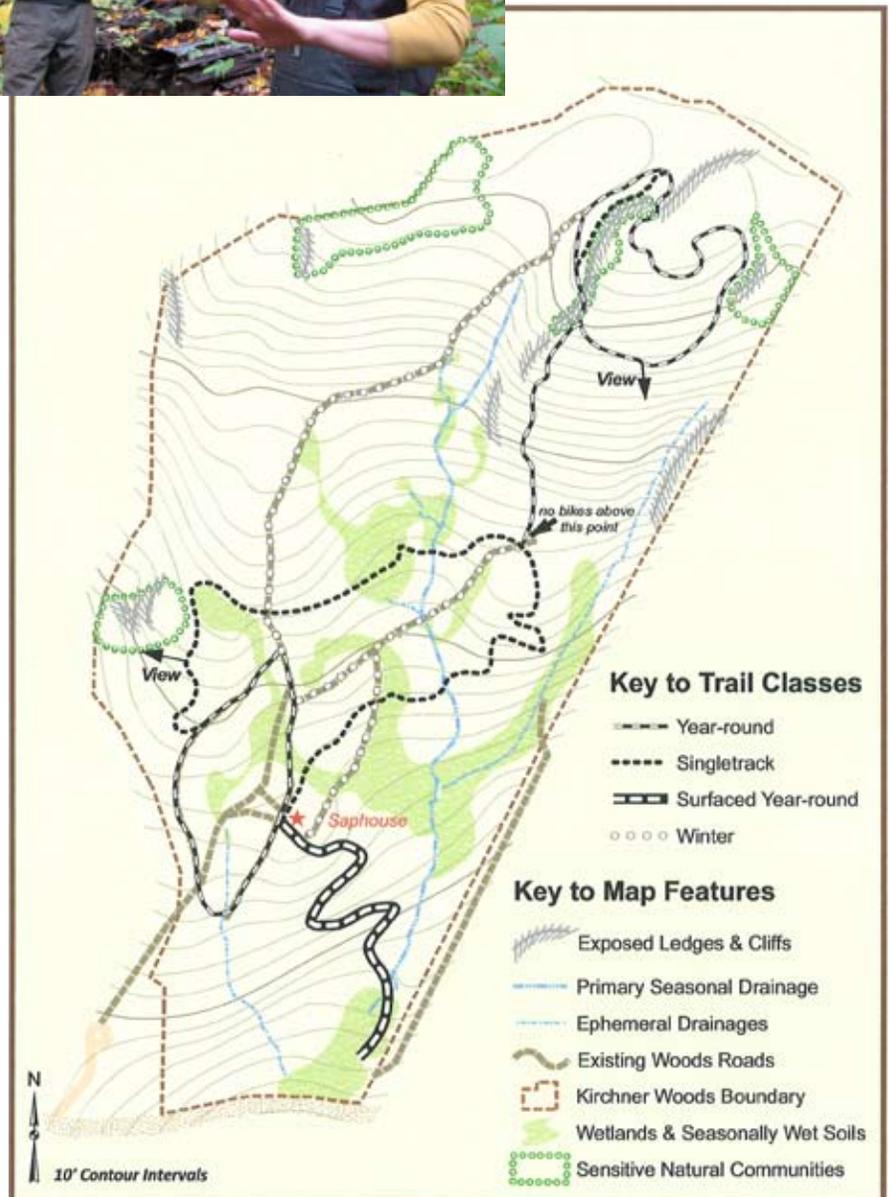
ing. If any adjustments are needed, the locations will be marked so that work can begin in early spring.

Joe and Amber will be back next year to take a look at emerging plants and be certain that sensitive species weren't overlooked during the late summer inventory. Once Joe and Amber give the green light, the real trail work will begin! Be sure to look for information from us about volunteer opportunities at Kirchner Woods. We'll need all the hands we can get in the spring during trail construction to ensure these trails are built sustainably for the future.



Hardy Avery, of Sustainable Trailworks, lays out the plan for the trail work days at Kirchner Woods.

Below: Draft trail map developed by Preserve Land Works and Sustainable Trailworks.



10th Annual Stowe Land Trust

More than fifty people toasted to a decade of commitment and generosity Lee and Alice Dana Spencer have demonstrated to Stowe Land Trust and the community during the reception following Stowe Land Trust's 10th Annual Invitational Golf Tournament. For ten years Stowe Land Trust has had the fortune of holding its golf tournament at West Hill Golf Course and since that time it has grown into the largest and most important fundraiser for SLT.

Participants in the golf tournament held at this family's spectacular private course are rewarded with a view of the distinct landscape characteristic of the sense of place SLT is working to protect with your support. This year, in spite of the troubled economy, over

\$24,000 was raised to support Stowe Land Trust in its efforts to conserve farm and forest land and to protect public access to special recreational opportunities. With the help of more than sixty local businesses and individuals who provided everything from gift certificates and garden globes to 5 star dinners and pink paisley handbags, we had a great time celebrating the 10th anniversary of Stowe Land Trust's golf tournament.

Many thanks to our sponsors and all who attended. Your participation in this event makes our work possible. We look forward to you joining us again next year, and another great year of fine weather and record breaking golf scores!



Congratulations to this year's tournament winners!

First Place: Griff Sexton, Harry Bonyun, Millie Merrill & Jamie Coffrin (not pictured)

Second Place: Jake Jacobson, Herb Hillman, Heidi Scheuermann & Phil Scott

Third Place: Claudia Elliman, Mike Pucillo, Anne Cresci & John Douglas



Invitational Golf Tournament



*Be sure to thank these individuals
and businesses for their support of this
fun and successful event.*

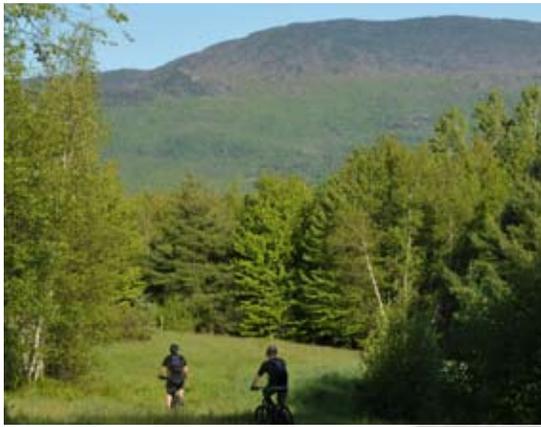
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Well Heeled
Whiteface Lodge

Thank you!

The Vermont Ride Center



Stowe Land Trust recognizes land conservation as more than the static act of preserving a piece of land. Land conservation is meant to enhance the community's sense of place and its economic vitality. The 513 acre Adams Camp property, conserved by SLT in 2006, is a great example of how conserved land continues to play a valuable role in the fabric of the community. Today, Adams Camp is the focus of an initiative to develop the Vermont Ride Center, an extensive network of mountain bike trails offering a full range of experiences for residents and visitors to the area.

Developed by the International Mountain Bike Association, the ride center concept is meant to create exceptional recreational opportunities for all ability levels while bringing major economic benefits

to the community through tourism and economic development. According to Rick Sokoloff, Chair of the Stowe Mountain Bike Club (SMBC), "the Waterbury/Stowe area was the ideal candidate for a ride center because of the resources and infrastructure already in place such as camping, trails and several active mountain bike clubs". SMBC and the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) sees the development of the Ride Center as an opportunity "to link trail systems on public and private lands as well as tie in area businesses", according to VMBA Chair Matt Swartz.

The vision of the Vermont Ride Center is a system of trails extending from Little River State Park in Waterbury through the Cottonbrook area of Mt. Mansfield State Forest, to Trapp Family Lodge and Stowe Mountain Resort lands in Stowe. Trail design for the Adams Camp property features a concentrated network of approximately 7 miles of single-track trails that will connect to other "pods" by a network of doubletrack trails.

Anyone who has ridden at the Kingdom Trails in East Burke can attest to the popularity of mountain biking and its success in sustaining the local economy. By working with organizations like the SMBC and VMBA to design and build a sustainable trail system that accommodates a variety of ability levels, the community and Stowe Land Trust are investing in the health of the area and continuing its rich recreational history.

Community

Does mountain biking truly cause more impact on natural resources than other trail uses?

According to the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), very little research has been done to evaluate the ecological effects of mountain biking.

Existing scientific studies indicate, however, that while mountain biking, like all forms of recreational activity, can result in measurable impacts to vegetation, soil, water resources, and wildlife, the environmental effects of well-managed mountain biking are minimal.

Trail design, construction, and maintenance may be much more important factors in controlling erosion than excluding specific user groups.

For more information visit, www.imba.com

Federal Tax Incentive Could Expire By December 31st

Generous landowners who voluntarily donate conservation easements to Stowe Land Trust are inspired by many things: love of their community, connection to their land, and a desire to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is central to our work to permanently protect valuable natural resources. But for almost all of our donors, donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community. Unless Congress acts now, those federal tax benefits will be dramatically scaled back at the end of 2009.

Two important bills – H.R. 1831 and S. 812 – have been introduced in Congress to make the enhanced conservation easement tax incentive permanent. The 2008 Farm Bill recently extended a 2006 incentive that enables family farmers, ranchers, and other moderate-



income landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land. The legislation allows easement donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%);
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and

- Continue to take deductions for as long as 16 years (up from 6 years).

When asked about his decision to conserve the 32 acre Joe's Pond property in Morris-town, Ron Stancliff said, "We wanted to retain ownership and the ability to manage the property while making sure our land was protected for future generations". The federal tax incentive enabled the Stancliff family to meet their financial needs as well as their conservation values.

Each day we are touched by the generous and inspired landowners who work with us. A permanent incentive will make it easier for others in our community to build on their love of the land and permanently protect our community's natural heritage. For more information about conservation options with Stowe Land Trust or to learn more about the federal tax incentive please contact us at 802.253.7221.

Thank You!

2009 Members

The work of a local land trust relies on the generous support of the community it serves. At Stowe Land Trust we are fortunate to have a broad base of individual donors and local businesses who share an appreciation for the working farms, forest lands and wildlife habitat that make this such an exceptional area to live and work. As Stowe Land Trust wraps up this year, we extend to you, our donors, our deepest thanks for your steadfast commitment and support. With you by Stowe Land Trust's side, there is nothing we can't accomplish.

Our membership year runs from November 1st through October 31st. Make the most of your membership and save SLT money in postage and future mailings by sending in your 2010 membership contribution today.



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Charlie Berry Becomes an Emeritus Director for Stowe Land Trust

During his thirteen year tenure as a board member for Stowe Land Trust, Charlie could be counted on for many things, from bartending to investment oversight. He served as board President, leading the organization through the complicated yet triumphant Adams Camp conservation project in 2006. As board Treasurer, Charlie was responsible for ensuring SLT's financial sustainability during a time of growth and transition. In addition to his terms as President and Treasurer, Charlie served on more than a half dozen committees. At times, Charlie was in the office so often we joked about creating an additional office space for him.

2009 marks the end of Charlie's term as a board member for Stowe Land Trust. In recognition of the tremendous dedication he has shown to Stowe Land Trust and our community, Charlie was recently appointed emeritus director, an honorary position with SLT. As to be expected from such a committed person, Charlie has agreed to continue to serve on SLT's Finance Committee and will remain engaged in a variety of other ways.

Thank you Charlie!



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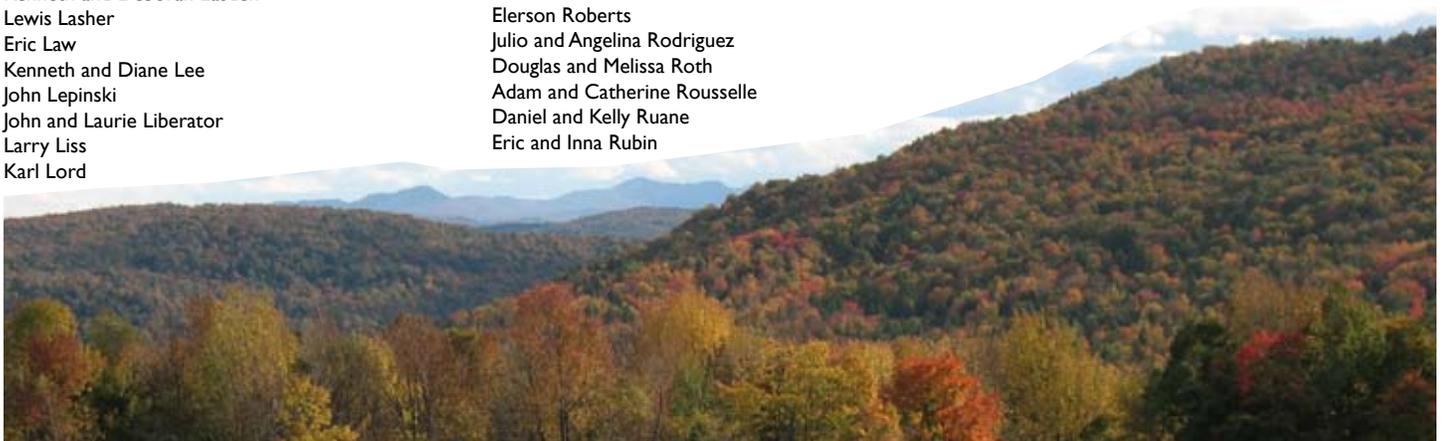
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Stone Walls & Cellar Holes: What Our Landscape Can Tell Us About Our Past



Have you ever happened upon a stone wall on a walk in the woods and wondered at the reason for such a back breaking property marker? Perhaps you have seen cellar holes miles from any road and wondered who would live in so remote a place. Wandering the forests of northern New England it is common to encounter relics reminding us of how our predecessors lived in this landscape and the changes it has experienced over the last century. To the keen observer, the forest can serve as an interpretive walk through history if you know some of the signs to look for.

Stone walls are almost as common as maple trees and hobble bush in our forests. Try to imagine this same landscape without its shroud of trees. During the mid 1800's much of the forest had been cut to accommodate sheep farming, the predominant land use in New England at that time. Stone walls were typically constructed for one of two reasons, to contain livestock or to clear land for tillage. Check for small stones wedged in amongst the large field stones the next time you come upon a stonewall. If small stones are present this suggests the stones had been removed from fields for tillage and planting crops.

The Sterling Valley, known for its dramatic

landscape and remote feel is an example where the landscape has a story to tell about our past. Maple Run Lane and the Page properties, located in Sterling Valley, are bisected by an extensive network of large stonewalls. Mounds of field stone piled in the middle of the forest for no obvious reason make a lot more sense when you imagine the area ab-

One of several mounds of field stone on Maple Run Lane property.



sent trees and think of the stone pile next to your garden. In the northwest corner of the 100 acre Page property is the stone foundation remains of a sugar house indicating that sheep farming and sugaring co-existed high in the Sterling Range.

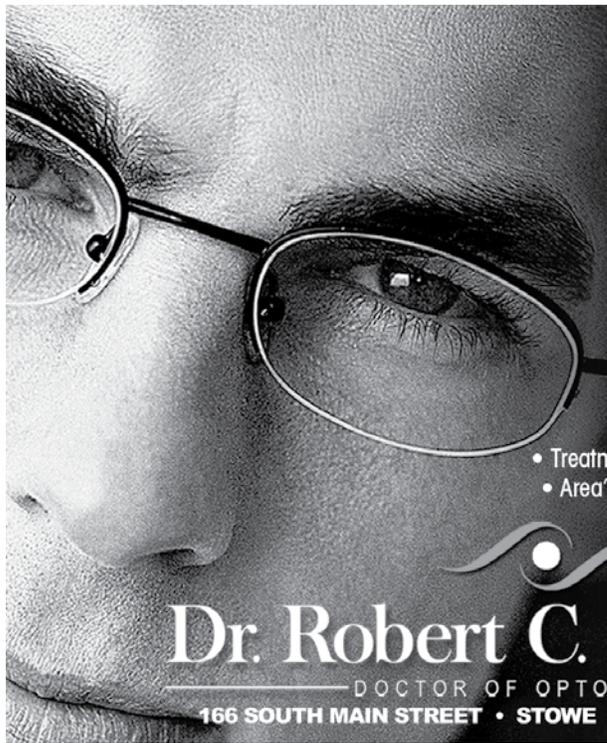
Harry Burnham owned and managed a hillside farm in Stowe Hollow for several decades. Walking through Raven Hill Forest at the Burnham Farm, it becomes obvious that different land uses have taken place here. Understory trees and shrubs are nearly absent from the sugarbush in the lower

elevations of the forest. As you walk further uphill and pass a row of barbed wire fencing there is an abrupt change in forest composition. The understory becomes very dense with sugar maple and hobble bush. The easy answer would be different land uses - different landowners. In this case, however, Harry had been using sheep to keep the understory in the sugarbush clear. Nearly twenty years after the last sheep left the hillside, their presence is still very noticeable on the landscape.

Another conserved property owned by Stowe Land Trust rich with historic relics is Mill Trail, located off Notchbrook Road. Several generations of life and land use have left their imprint. A pair of fieldstone cellar

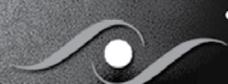
holes are all that remain of the Sallies family farmhouse and barn found on maps from 1850. Downhill from the Sallies' farmstead along the Notch Brook, two tiers of stone foundation walls line the Notchbrook for about 75 feet, with remains of mill machinery scattered upstream. In the 1860's, wooden tubs to transport butter on the railway were built here at the Turner Butter Tub Mill.

With a curious mind and the time to wander, a wealth of knowledge about our past can be gained from a walk in the woods.



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