

Mountain Views

Quarterly Newsletter of Stowe Land Trust

Summer 2011



Shutesville Hill: A Critical Path for Wildlife

At a recent gathering of state and local officials, conservation groups, and interested landowners, members of Stowe Land Trust's board and staff were on-hand to witness the release of a new study that documents 35 important wildlife highway crossings in Vermont. The Shutesville Hill area of Route 100 – an area that stretches from the Waterbury Fish and Game Club to the entrance of Black Bear Run – has been declared one of the most critical crossings in the state.

Stowe Land Trust has partnered with the Waterbury and Stowe Conservation Commissions, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the Green Mountain Scenic Byways Committee and other groups to highlight the importance of this wildlife crossing.

Animals such as bear, moose, bobcat and deer need large blocks of contiguous habitat to meet their basic needs of food, shelter, and a safe place to raise their young. Highways like Route 100 often cut across these blocks of habitat, resulting not only in injured drivers and damaged cars, but in high animal mortality and wildlife populations that become genetically isolated from one another.

Drive along Route 100 and these large blocks of habitat are clearly visible: the Worcester

Range to the east and the Green Mountain Range to the west. Any animal that wants to travel between these areas needs a safe place to cross busy Route 100. The large landholdings in the area surrounding Shutesville Hill provide cover and food for wildlife with minimal disturbance. It becomes critical to preserve the few remaining animal crossing places by protecting them from roadside development that can block the wildlife corridor completely – this is where Stowe Land Trust can play a role.

“There are very few opportunities for animals to cross between Waterbury and Stowe, because animals veer away from homes that dot the landscape near Vermont 100,” said Jesse Mohr, a consultant hired by NWF to document so-called “critical paths” for wildlife. “This is really it; Shutesville Hill is absolutely irreplaceable.” Development patterns have funneled wildlife toward the few remaining natural areas flanking the road, including the wetlands and thick forest cover along Shutesville Hill.

While land protection is a key tool for protecting areas like Shutesville Hill, the Agency of Transportation and the Department of Fish and Wildlife are reviewing Mohr's recommendations for ways to protect people

too. The recommendations include ways to engineer and maintain highways at crossing places that reduce vehicle-animal collisions. They also include more effective “Moose Crossing” signs, brighter, wider road stripes to alert nighttime drivers to the presence of an animal blocking part of the stripe, reducing the speed limit from its current 50 mph, and managing vegetation so that animals don't linger too long at the road's edge.

The partnership that has formed to raise awareness about the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor will continue to track information about animal crossings, and work with landowners to enhance their properties for all species. How can you help? Visit our website or see the box below.

YOU CAN HELP!

Have you seen a moose browsing at the roadside or a deer bound across the road?

Share your wildlife observations from the Shutesville Hill area.

Please send emails with your observations to maplebird@comcast.net. Be sure to include the date of the observation, the wildlife species, location (be as specific as possible), and any noticeable behaviors or other comments of note.

*"The sympathies and sighs
for our last companions
are these soft and lofty pines
who easily outweather winter,
resin always warm
and hold our icy
{unintelligible} out of harm."*

– Harry Burnham

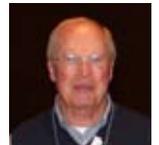
(from a poem in the White Pine Forest)



From the Executive Director and Board Chair



Heather Furman



Cliff Johnson

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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.*

Intuitively, it makes sense that Route 100 would be a major obstacle for animals that want to move from the height of the Green Mountains to the wilds of the Worcester's. We've all mourned deer, fox and even beaver that lose the battle with cars as, out of necessity, they move from their natural world into our man-made one. A recently released study confirms that animals are getting squeezed into fewer and fewer places where they can safely make that crossing (cover story). It just so happens that a critical crossing - "the Moosey spot" - Shutesville Hill - is right here in Stowe. This has prompted SLT to support the various initiatives now being launched to help protect wildlife as they move among the larger habitat blocks that they call home.

Helping and supporting wildlife by virtue of protecting wildlife habitat is one of the fundamental goals of SLT. Many of the dear friends that we profile on page 7 were driven by a passion for the land that supports these creatures. The thrill of spotting a wild trout, nesting falcons, and a fox with its young, are all scenes that inspired John, Harry and Steve to play the important role they each had in the conservation of Stowe.

Of course, our natural environment does more than just support wildlife. It provides a place for us to walk, hike, forage and fish. It gives us a relaxing afternoon and even provides nourish

ment - wild edibles are abundant in spring and all summer long if you know where to look (page 6).

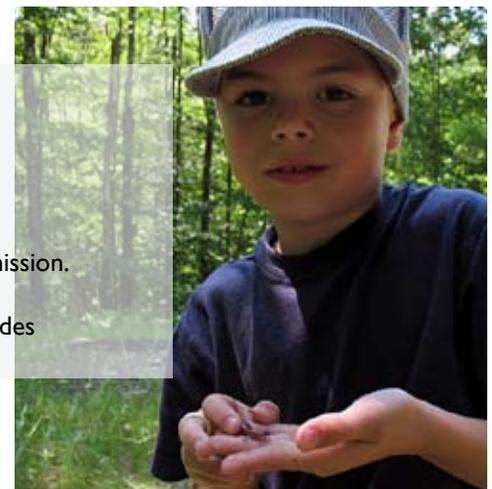
For all that nature gives us, it feels good to give something in return. This year, Kirchner Woods was the venue for National Trails Day on June 4th, where over a dozen volunteers used good old-fashioned elbow grease to tackle a multitude of task (page 5) and have made the place shine! Want more ways to get involved? Whether you're retired with lots of free time or have only 30 minutes a month, have your name added to our volunteer list (page 4).

Here at SLT we strive every day to protect our natural world. We take seriously our responsibilities as stewards of the land and our new 3-year strategic plan reflects this commitment (back cover). The permanent protection that we've provided to dozens of properties around our community requires SLT to take the long view to ensure a future where these lands are protected. You can help be a part of this legacy with a planned gift to SLT. It's easier than you think, and is a way of giving back that is truly lasting. The relationship we have with our landscape and the wild creatures that inhabit it is delicate, but we all have a role to play in making this relationship strong and successful. Thank you again for all you do to support conservation in Stowe. Happy Summer!

Maintaining healthy wildlife populations is everyone's responsibility.

How can you make your home wildlife friendly?

- Secure garbage cans with locking lids.
- Feed pets indoors and don't let them wander.
- Disinfect bird baths often to avoid disease transmission.
- Plant only native vegetation in your yard.
- Minimize or eliminate the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides.





Wild Edibles with Russ Cohen
Saturday, July 23, 2011
1:00 – 4:30 pm
Lake Mansfield Trout Club

Join Russ Cohen of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, expert forager and author, on an outing to learn about some of the tastiest wild plants in Stowe.

Russ will present information on species identification tips, seasonality and preparation methods, along with general guidelines for safe and environmentally-responsible foraging. Russ will also bring a foraged goodie for you to taste!

This event is being hosted by SLT for Pinnacle Society members and their guests. If you would like to RSVP for this event or are interested in becoming a Pinnacle Society member, please contact Executive Director, Heather Furman at 802.253.7221 or email heather@stowelandtrust.org.

Thank you Pinnacle Society members for your commitment to land conservation in our community.

- Friend of Stowe Land Trust (2)
- Bill and Nancy Anderson
- Allan F. Beck
- Charlie and Gibby Berry
- Philip Branton and Ellen Lazarus
- Rick and Ann Bresnahan
- Paul and Kathy Bosland
- Kevin and Julie Buchanan
- Donna and Jake Carpenter
- Kitty and Alan Coppock
- Denise Burt Cushwa
- Rick and Lynn Davis
- Manuel and Marianne del Valle
- Peter and Deborah Dodson
- Trowbridge and Claudia Elliman
- Tom and Mary Evslin
- Michael Fenlon and Linda Sallop
- Mark and Liza Ferguson
- Vera Fitzgerald
- Robert and Jana Giordano
- Gerry and Terry Griffin
- Diane and Andreas Halvorsen
- David Harding and Jan Nyquist
- Christopher Hill and Susan Flicop
- Richard and Clea James
- The James E. Robison Foundation
- Cliff Johnson
- Frank and Marion Kellogg
- John and Diane Kemp
- Bonnie Knight
- Jack and Laura Lancaster

- Susan Leadem
- George Lengvari
- Lefty and Joyce Nichols Lewis
- Chris McKown and Abby Johnson
- Clare Tweedy McMorris
- Bunny and Peter Merrill
- John and Millie Merrill
- Melissa and David Norton
- Dan and Cookie Owen
- Jack and Caroline Patten
- John and Adrienne Peacock
- Michael and Deborah Pucillo
- Maureen and Michael Ruetters
- James and Ruth Santos
- Nicholas A. Skinner
- Oliver and Gay Slesar
- Shapleigh and Peggy Smith
- Spector Fund at the Boston Foundation
- Lee and Alice Spencer
- Stires Stark Family Foundation
- Tortimaki Foundation per the request of Mr. & Mrs. Taussig
- Union Bank
- Vermont Community Foundation advised by Peter & Bari Dreissigacker
- Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli
- Richard and Sally Watts
- David Wilkens and Molly Pindell
- Roger M. and Jill J. Witten
- Norris and Judy Wolff



Support SLT with a Charitable Gift Annuity

Stowe Land Trust (SLT) has a partnership with The Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) to offer new gift opportunities which provide donors with income for life. SLT wants to encourage increased financial support, especially for our endowment funds, and these additional gift vehicles provide supporters with advantages which we have not been able to offer previously.

One of these vehicles is called a Charitable Gift Annuity. In exchange for a gift of cash, stocks or bonds, the donor receives income each year for the rest of his or her life. The amount of that income depends on the age of the donor when the gift is made. Once the annuity has been established, the amount of income remains fixed for life. No more worries about interest rates or the stock market! Some sample rates at various ages appear in the chart (current rates are from July, 2010). Charitable gift annuities can last for one or two lives.

Charitable gift annuities are simple to understand, easy to arrange, and can be purchased in any amount above the minimum gift level of

\$15,000. Each annuity is guaranteed by all the assets of VCF. Donors receive a charitable deduction from their income taxes when the annuity is established, and much of their annual income from the annuity is not subject to income tax.

Sample Annuity Payments for a \$15,000 Gift*			
Age	Rate	Annuity	Tax Deduction**
60	4.8%	\$720	\$4,129
70	5.8%	\$870	\$5,408
80	7.5%	\$1,125	\$7,028

*These figures are for illustration purposes only. Minimum age is 60, and minimum gift is \$15,000.

**The deduction is estimated and based on the monthly IRS discount rate.

The real benefit, though, is the ability to support SLT now, with no negative impact on the donor's current income. As a matter of fact, many gift annuitants have actually increased their current income by using this strategy. All assets remaining at the death of the annuitant are placed in a designated long-term fund at the Foundation for the sole use of SLT. The fund is invested by VCF with annual grant payments made to SLT in perpetuity.

If you would like to learn more about charitable gift annuities, contact Heather Furman, at 802-253-7221 or by e-mail at heather@stowelandtrust.org, or Tom Smith, CFP® at

The Vermont Community Foundation at 802-388-3355, Ext. 239, or by email at tsmith@vermontcf.org.

Volunteer Opportunities with Stowe Land Trust

Whether or not you are an SLT member, volunteering is a great way to get involved, obtain community service credits or dig a little deeper into what it takes to keep our land protected and available for public enjoyment. We are always looking for folks interested in lending a hand. If you would like to learn more about these opportunities and others, please contact us at 802.253.7221 or info@stowelandtrust.org.

Trail Handy Person

Occasionally we receive calls from hikers letting us know of a downed tree, damaged sign or broken bridge plank. We can't always get out right away to address the problem and would love to have someone to call on for assistance. Stop by the office or send us an email to learn more. This is a great opportunity for youth camps or clubs looking for small yet rewarding volunteer projects.

Office Help

Not our most glamorous opportunity but crucially important none-the-less. Spend an hour or two at "command central" helping out with occasional mailings like this newsletter.

Conserved Land Stewards

SLT is required to annually visit each of the 28 properties it has conserved over the past 25 years. This ensures the conservation values of the special lands in our community are being protected. Volunteer stewards are a critical component of SLT's ability to uphold its commitment to protect conserved land.

Several veteran volunteer stewards are passing the torch this year opening up some of Stowe's most interesting conserved landscapes to others interested in getting more engaged in SLT's stewardship program.

We are looking for volunteers to monitor these conserved lands:

- DuMont (Moscow) - 47 acres
- Halvorsen (Brownsville) - 32 acres
- Mayo Farm - 235 acres
- Moscow Ballfield - 4.7 acres
- Nichols Field - 37 acres
- Wiessner Woods - 79 acres



Benefit Bake Raises Dough for SLT!

Five years and the Benefit Bake hosted by Pie in the Sky is still a fun and tremendously popular fundraiser for Stowe Land Trust. Once a year members of the community have an opportunity to gather together in support of land conservation over delicious pizza.

Stowe Land Trust is truly fortunate to be able to partner with Skip and Susan Verchot, owners of Pie in the Sky on this event. By generously donating 100% of pizza sales on Thursday, May 19th, this event raised over \$2,000.

Skip and Susan and their great staff deserve a huge thank you. We are also grateful to all of you who showed up in remarkable numbers to make this such a successful day for both Pie in the Sky and Stowe Land Trust.



Photo: Zoe checks in with Pooh while she waits for pizza at Pie in the Sky during the Benefit Bake.

Stowe Land Trust's 12th Annual Golf Tournament and Calcutta Social

Stowe Land Trust's Annual Invitational Golf Tournament is not only our most successful fundraiser, it is the most fun!

Festivities begin at the Commodores Inn the night before the tournament. Guests and golfers will enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar while getting a sneak peek at the team pairings. You have a chance to win big in the Calcutta by betting on your favorite team. Past year's winnings have amounted to over \$4,000! New this year, we will be offering an exciting door prize at the Calcutta but you must be present for your chance to win.

The Calcutta Social is \$25 per person for those not registered to play in the tournament. Attendance at the reception following the tournament is included in this fee.

On tournament day, the course will be played in an 18 hole scramble format, with four person teams selected by the SLT Golf Committee. The entry fee is \$175 per golfer.

Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a demonstration by Spruce Peak golf pro, Ron Philo, are just some of the great reasons to attend this event.



Wednesday, August 3, 2011
Calcutta Social 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Commodores Inn

Thursday, August 4, 2011
West Hill Golf Course
Tournament Registration 11 am
Shotgun Start at Noon
Reception to follow 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Join SLT at the reception following the tournament for an awards ceremony and raffle drawing where you have a chance to win prizes from a number of local businesses and restaurants. The reception is only \$25 per person if you are not registered to play in the tournament.



For those of you who haven't participated in SLT's golf tournament, this is your opportunity to play the private West Hill Golf Course - a stunning 9 hole course with sweeping views of the Little River valley.

This event helps support Stowe Land Trust's mission to conserve our community's natural beauty. We look forward to seeing you on the links!

Space in the tournament fills up fast. Call or send in your registration today!

For more information contact Stowe Land Trust at 802.253.7221 or, becca@stowelandtrust.org.

SLT Celebrates National Trails Day with Volunteers at Kirchner Woods

The sun graced us with its presence on the morning of Saturday June 4th as staff and volunteers gathered at the Kirchner Woods parking area to tackle a long list of tasks to prepare the trails for a season of hiking, mountain biking, exploring and walking the dog.

The group busily installed a new brochure box to protect the new trail maps from the elements, intersections are now clearly marked by sharp looking trail signs, and the trails are marked, raked, clipped and ready for your visit.

Once you recover from knowing where you are going because of the new signs, you will see that much of the debris littering the area around the sugar house is gone. Yankee Home Solutions donated the use of their dump truck for volunteers to fill with scrap metal and tubing left over from Jerry's sugaring operation.

Volunteers were once again rewarded with huge, delicious sandwiches and cookies from Edelweiss Mountain Deli. Thanks to all of you who volunteered and Yankee Home Solutions and Edelweiss for making the day such an enjoyable success.



Walking through the forest on an early spring day your senses are flooded with the scent of fresh earth, decaying leaves...and onions? Moist hill-sides rich in nutrients are blanketed with wild leeks or “ramps” as they are referred to locally, almost as soon as the snow has melted. Bent or broken leaves caused by walking through a patch give off a stong onion scent.

Vermont’s calcium rich soils are especially suited to the wild leek and therefore it appears frequently in the State’s history. The wild leek was originally called *winooski* by the Vermont Abenaki. Because of the wild leeks’ abundant growth along the bank of the Winooski River, that river and a town near its mouth were named after this plant.

Farmers attempted to eradicate wild leeks because the cows would eat them and it made their milk taste like onions and so they would send their sons out to pick it in early spring (Decker Harris and McKown).

Bring a trowel and a paper bag with you on your early spring forays in the woods. Look for wild leeks on wet seeping slopes and use your sense of smell to know when you have stumbled into a patch.

The flavor of wild leek falls somewhere between onion and garlic and both the leaves and the bulb can be used in dishes. When

you get them back to the kitchen remove the outer papery wrapper surrounding the bulb. When considering how to use them in a dish, feel free to substitute them when recipes call for onions or scallions.

It is important to be mindful of the amount of any wild edible, including leeks, harvested from a patch. By distributing your harvest to numerous patches you are helping maintain the integrity of the plant population.

Fiddleheads, named for their curled shape similar to the scroll of a violin, start showing up at grocery stores and farm stands in April. Wild edible foragers are visiting their favorite streambank locations selecting the most firm

tightly curled fiddleheads. They grow in clumps and should be trimmed at the ground rather than uprooted. Trim only a few from each clump leaving some for other foragers and to help regenerate more growth the following year.

Remove the brown papery leaf from the plant and rinse fiddleheads well to remove the sand from spring floods. Once they are clean they can be

prepared in an endless combination of dishes from baking on pizza to sauteeing with garlic. Boiling fiddleheads should take only 8-10 minutes because you want them to have a little crunch, similar to asparagus.



Wild leeks and fiddleheads are some of the season’s earliest and most common edible plants. However, the growing season continues to offer tastes of the wild from mushrooms and berries to roots and other fruits. Be sure you are confident with identification of wild plants before preparing a meal with them. There are a number of resources available covering the identification and use of wild edible plants including this month’s Pinnacle Society guest, Russ Cohen’s book *Wild Plants I Have Known and Eaten*.

Sources: Plant profiles from Vermont’s Non-Timber Forest Resources. Kameron Decker Harris and Claire McKown. <http://www.uvm.edu/~kharris/ntfp/index.html>



Fiddleheads are named for their curled shape similar to the scroll of a violin.

Pinnacle Society members and their friends are invited to join Russ Cohen, naturalist and forager with Massachusetts Fish and Game on a wild edible walk and talk on July 23, 2011. See page 3 for details.





Remembering Stowe Land Trust Friends

Their love of the land will endure for future generations because of the generous and thoughtful ways they contributed to Stowe Land Trust.

John McVickar was the founder of Stowe Land Trust and carried the organization along as its President for 10 years from the mid 80's to mid 90's. He laid the groundwork for Stowe Land Trust to become the conservation voice for the community; he was at the helm during the Town's acquisition of the Mayo Farm, helped foster the creation of Wiessner Woods, and worked with another conservation pioneer, Johannes von Trapp, to conserve over 1000 acres of his family's land.

John was a good and courageous man, and a true visionary for protecting the beauty of our natural world. Even after his move south to Virginia, he always stayed in touch with Stowe – sending letters to the editor of the Stowe Reporter and encouraging emails to our staff always signed “Uncle John”. Our office is littered with volumes of John's early documents, heavily underlined with his trusty felt-tipped pen. His work, set in motion nearly 25 years ago, will always live on in the landscape that surrounds us.



Stowe Reporter



Stowe Reporter

Harry Burnham lived an interesting and meaningful life and touched many with his love of knowledge. There are many in our community now smiling to recollect sharing his company and great conversations over the past 57 years. He moved to Stowe Hollow in 1954 where he raised about 60 head of sheep, managed a sugar bush and an apple orchard. For many years he lovingly maintained trails open to all in the Raven Hill and White Pine Forests, including poems engraved on slate and hung along the trail. A poem that once hung in the White Pine Forest is included in the inside cover of this newsletter.

As part of the Stowe Tricentennial Conservation project marking the 200th anniversary of the founding of Stowe, Harry signed a conservation easement guaranteeing that his farm would continue to define Stowe's unique character and natural heritage for future generations. An announcement for the project characterized Harry as a hard working and durable citizen. Remarking on his decision to conserve the hill farm, Harry said he hoped “to spend the remainder of his years in Stowe, living on and keeping the property as well as he has done since he bought it in 1954. After that, future owners will have to adhere to the terms of the conservation easement.” Harry is pictured here with his beloved hill farm in the background.

Steve Mayhall believed in giving back. He became a volunteer steward with SLT because he cared for the land and the community that he called home. His interest in fly fishing was the impetus for volunteering on the conserved DuMont property in Moscow. He said that it was the least he could do in return for all the memories and joy that river had given to him over the years. Steve's inquisitive mind often brought him through the door of the SLT office to strategize new ideas so that he could help others. As a faithful yoga practitioner, Steve embraced the “beginners mind” - always willing to look at the world with a fresh perspective. We will miss his positive presence in our community. In honor of Steve, yoga instructors Frank and Judith Foti are hosting a “Maha Sadhana” - which translates as “The Great Practice” in Sanskrit - on Friday, July 15th from 5:30 – 8:00 pm. The class is open to all. For more information, please contact Heather Furman by sending an email to heather@stowelandtrust.org.



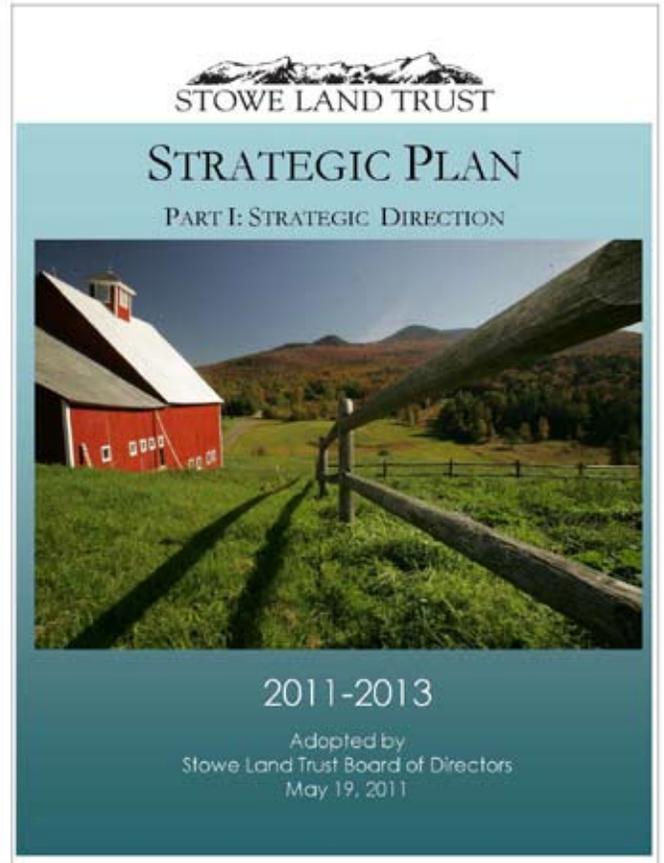
New Strategic Plan Released

As Stowe Land Trust approaches its 25th anniversary, we felt that a comprehensive strategic plan was necessary to guide our work, maximize the pace of land protection, make the best use of our resources, and truly act on our community's conservation desires.

The following strategic goals were set during this process. For a copy of the strategic plan visit www.stowelandtrust.org or stop by the office for a bound copy.

SLT's Strategic Goals

- 1. Conservation:** The essential character of the Stowe landscape is conserved through pro-active and responsive land protection.
- 2. Stewardship:** SLT conserved and owned properties are sustainably managed to protect their conservation values.
- 3. Fundraising:** SLT has sufficient funds to meet its conservation goals and fulfill its perpetual conservation obligations, stewardship obligations and annual operations.
- 4. Solid Organization:** Effective people and systems throughout the organization provide direction, resources, and follow-through to support SLT's mission.
- 5. Reputation:** SLT has a solid reputation as an essential community institution.



www.stowelandtrust.org

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