



New Project

Let's Connect Stowe!

The Adams Camp Connector creates an opportunity many have dreamed of for decades: an uninterrupted trail network from Mt. Mansfield to Stowe Village.

"We are lucky to live in this town with so much access to recreation," said Michy Lemay. "It's important to protect the reasons why Stowe is Stowe. Nature is everything to me. It's the place I feel most at peace, at home, connected, whole, and alive. All day, every day, I just want to be out there."

The Alpine Junior Program Director at Mt. Mansfield Academy and co-owner of Rugged Adventures Summer Camp, Michy has hiked, biked, and skied just about every trail in town. She's pretty excited about the Adams Camp Connector.

First and foremost, said Michy, cyclists will have a safer, more enjoyable way to access trails in Adam's Camp. "What I love is that there will be a way to get up into the woods from anywhere on the Rec Path without having to go on the road. Anytime you take cars out of the equation—especially with campers or athletes—it makes me feel better and it's way more fun."

The fact that people will, for the first time in Stowe's history, be able to travel an uninterrupted trail network from Mt. Mansfield to Stowe Village is "just super cool," said Michy. "It's expanding access and adventure. Isn't that why most of us are here?"

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Change is in the air.

Can you feel it? I was in my garden the other day thinking about how rapidly Stowe seems to be changing when I noticed that a cherry tomato that was green the day before had turned an early hue of orange.

The earth reminds me constantly that, as Greek philosopher, Heroclitus, famously said, “the only constant in life is change.”

Change can be exciting...and it can be challenging. At Stowe Land Trust, our job is to navigate change with our mission—**conserving the land and waters we love to enhance the quality of life for all connected to the Stowe area**—always front and center. In the following pages, you’ll read about how we are:

- Working to **steward forests for health and resilience** in the face of a changing climate 100, even 200, years into the future.
- Conserving **The Adams Camp Connector** which will allow for uninterrupted trails from Mt. Mansfield to Stowe Village—a first in Stowe’s history!
- Collaborating to find opportunities for **land conservation to support affordable housing**.

Last, but certainly not least, Stowe Land Trust is celebrating another exciting change! Please join me in warmly welcoming our new executive director, Tom Rogers. Tom joins us from leadership roles at The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife. You may know Tom and his family already as deeply engaged members of our community. To learn more about Tom, take a peek at the brief Q&A in this newsletter, or read the full version on our website at stowelandtrust.org.

We have some big considerations to tackle as a community. Stowe Land Trust will be at the table, a voice for protecting the special places we love for all connected to the Stowe area.



Amy Stewart
Chair, Board of Directors



connect
to something
more

(continued from page one)

What is the Adams Camp Connector?

The Adams Camp Connector is an 85-acre parcel connecting two large areas of previously conserved land: the Bouchard Farm and Adams Camp. Conservation of the land will protect important connections for recreationists and wildlife moving along the Little River to the eastern slopes of Mt. Mansfield.

While a new, multi-use trail connecting Mt. Mansfield to Stowe Village is the headline, recreation is not the sole benefit. The parcel is also considered critical to protecting an intact forested habitat, and is important for climate resilience and for wildlife.

Considered a “highest priority area” by Vermont Conservation Design, the parcel is one piece of a large, intact forest block identified as critical to the state’s overall ecological health. When we conserve highest priority lands like this, we add to a growing map of interconnected areas that uphold the ecological integrity of Vermont and protect its natural legacy.

For Michy, who joined the Stowe Land Trust Board in 2023, it’s about protecting the very attributes of Stowe that make it special. “For me, what it boils down to is that I absolutely love nature, and I absolutely love activity,” she said. “I feel so grateful to live here and don’t want to ever take that for granted.”

How can you help?

Stowe Land Trust is responsible for securing \$820,000 for the Adams Camp Connector project and stewardship endowment costs. And, we have to have funding in place by December 1, 2024.

Please join us in supporting this project! For more information and to make a donation, visit stowelandtrust.org/work/projects.





Evan Kay/Climb High Productions

For the first time in Stowe's history, people will be able to travel an uninterrupted trail network from Mt. Mansfield to Stowe Village.

Sweet Deal

In January 2024, Stowe Land Trust and Paul Percy arrived at an agreement to conserve Lot 5 of the Bouchard Farm—now known as the Adams Camp Connector project.

A win for both parties, the Percy family will continue to tap the same sugar maples they've been tapping since the 1980s. The property will remain a working forest, providing sap for the Percy's maple sugaring operation and the option for sustainably-harvested, local wood products into the future.

“

Our working farms and forests are as much a part of the landscape as the mountains. It's our heritage and, when the land is conserved, certain to be part of our future.

Paul Percy, Percy Farm





What Does the Fox Say?

Using models and wildlife cameras to study mammal movement through the Adams Camp Connector parcel

Since wildlife can't advocate for themselves, we rely on scientific study and observation to understand their behaviors and movement patterns. More importantly, we use this data to inform conservation projects.

This spring, UVM's Terrestrial Wildlife Ecology class used computer-based models and wildlife cameras to study how mammals may be moving through the Adams Camp Connector parcel. Thanks to their work, we have a much better understanding of what the fox-and others-might have to say about this special spot.



» Wildlife cameras captured fox, deer, fisher, raccoon, and coyote on the parcel, confirming the area's importance to wildlife. Some animals—like bear—were still hibernating during the study.

» The forest canopy on the eastern side of the parcel, which has an abundance of evergreen trees, provides important winter cover for a variety of animals.

» Models suggest that animals also tend to move along the Little River, which runs along the northern side of the parcel.

The study results will be used to inform the location of the new multi-use connector trail to ensure that the land remains a good place for both people and wildlife once it is protected.



A UVM student sets up a wildlife camera on the Adams Camp Connector.



Meet Tom Rogers, SLT's New Executive Director



A certified wildlife biologist with a master's degree in Biology and Ecology, Tom comes to Stowe Land Trust from The Nature Conservancy, where he was associate director of philanthropy. This is an abridged version of a full Q&A available on stowelandtrust.org.

What attracted you to the executive director position at Stowe Land Trust?

A big part of it is that this is my community. There is so much development pressure. There is so much change. That's fine—change is great. But are we being intentional about it as a community? Are we making decisions that ultimately shape our community in a positive way? Those things are so important to me.

What do you see as the biggest opportunity for SLT?

SLT is an incredibly well-respected, well-run organization. It has a lot of momentum and community support. What it doesn't have is capacity to meet the need right now. We've all seen the changes in the community—the demands and pressures—since the pandemic. Ten years ago, you could operate a much smaller organization and still

be effective. Right now, we need to accelerate the pace and scale of our work.

What are you most excited about in your new role?

One of the things I'm most excited about is working with the people of Stowe. I've been on Mountain Rescue for 12 years and been to virtually every Town Meeting since we moved here. There are amazing

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people working in town government and running partner nonprofits, so the ability to work with them and all the people who support SLT on a daily basis is really exciting.

How has your background prepared you to lead SLT at this moment?

This position really brings together all of my skill sets—fundraising, connecting with people, and talking about science. I’m really excited about how that all comes together. I have a background in wildlife biology and ecology, but it was my time as a guide that taught me how to connect with people. Building authentic relationships with people one-on-one and, ultimately, translating those relationships into success for something you all really care about has been foundational to my career.

How do you enjoy the outdoors here in the Stowe area?

So many ways! My favorite thing in the world is spending time outdoors with my family. Later this week, we are going camping at Green River Reservoir. We’ll get the girls up at 6 a.m., paddle across the reservoir, and drop them at school. In the summertime, I’m out on the mountain bike trails before work. In the winter, it’s backcountry skiing or skate skiing at Trapps.



A Massachusetts Family Gives Back to the Land they Love

“Every couple of months, it’s like we have this physical need to be in Stowe,” said Christina Evans, a new Stowe Land Trust member from Massachusetts. “There’s so much space, so much beauty. I love the mountains, but it’s really about the mood, the vibes, the values. We like what the town stands for. People here are outside, off their screens, looking around. There’s so much to do outdoors.”

Christina, her husband, Tom, and their four children, Emily, Audrey, Tim, and Matthew, have been visiting Stowe for nearly a decade. Fractional owners at Trapp Family Lodge since 2015, the family spends six weeks of the year hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing in Stowe, which has come to feel like a home away from home.

While out on the trails one afternoon, they noticed a sign for the Stowe Land Trust and decided to stop in to learn more. They became members on the spot.

“

We feel it’s important to support organizations that mean something to us. We love it here so, for us, the environment, the land, the wild, and making the outdoors a place where people can be healthy are worth protecting.

Christina Evans

Stewarding Land in a Changing Climate

Crafting a careful and place-specific approach to forest management

“Land conservation is an awesome first step,” said Bill Musson, Stowe Land Trust’s consulting forester at Redstart Forestry.

“It’s hard to know exactly what the land will look like in the future and what impact climate events will have, but we need healthy forests more than they need us. The benefits are immense—from air and water filtration to temperature regulation, soil stabilization, local wood products and recreation.”

While SLT’s campaigns to protect land are a highly visible part of our work, they are only the first step. When we take responsibility for a piece of land, we become stewards of that land forever. As part of thoughtful future planning, we have partnered with Redstart to update our management plans for Kirchner Woods, Wiessner Woods, Mill Trail, DuMont Meadow, and Page Forest. Resilience is front and center in those plans.

The Past Informs the Future

“When Europeans first arrived in this area, there was a lot of clearing of trees and moving or channelizing of streams to maximize land for agriculture,” Musson said. “The forests we are experiencing today are the product of the land use we’ve engaged in for a long time.”

Many SLT properties reflect this colonial history. Rather than pristine forest, the land in and around Stowe is largely the result of clear cutting that occurred about 200 years ago to create sheep pasture, followed by more heavy logging when the forests eventually regrew. The result? Large swaths of middle-aged forests where some of the biggest and best trees are gone, that are

more susceptible to today’s diseases and severe weather events.

Logging practices have changed a lot since the early 1900s, but foresters today are still dealing with the aftermath of those decisions as they rehabilitate the forests they caretake, in addition to dealing with a changing climate.

“Some may believe that the best approach to stewardship is to be totally hands off,” Musson said, “but that is an ‘illusion of preservation’ because our forests aren’t untouched, and we still consume wood products and use the forest for recreation. If we’re not using local wood, that means we are importing it from somewhere else, likely with greater carbon impact and no benefit to the local economy.” A careful and place-specific approach to management, Musson said, is a better strategy.

Creating Conditions for Resilience

Ensuring that conserved land stays healthy and diverse 50, 100, even 200+ years into the future requires a thoughtful approach today. Some of the ways we are addressing resilience with Redstart include:

• Flood Prevention

The flooding last summer highlighted Vermont’s vulnerability to localized climate events. One treatment we are exploring is “strategic wood additions,” in which large pieces of wood are added to small, upland streams to slow the downstream movement of water. “By slowing down the water, we allow it to access the stream’s natural floodplain and infiltrate the soil, increasing resilience to heavy storms and flooding events,” Musson said.

• Controlling Invasive Species

From the knotweed growing around the kiosk at a trailhead to honeysuckle at the edge of a wetland, invasive species and

pests are a huge threat to biodiversity and healthy forests. Controlling invasive species is also an important part of SLT's ongoing work.

- **Improving Diversity**

"Diversity roughly equals resilience," Musson said. "Diversity of species in terms of plants, animals and fungi; diversity in size and age; and a diverse forest structure and composition overall. The more complex, the more healthy and resilient forests are to climate events."

Whether SLT owns a property outright or partners with private landowners who have a conservation easement, climate resilience planning is an important part of our commitment to protecting land forever. Stay tuned as we work with Redstart over the next decade to put our new plans into action.



“

I like to support organizations that maintain trails and allow people to get out into nature. I'm getting fresh air. I'm getting exercise. I get to play with my chainsaw; and I like helping people. How could it get better than that?

Ed Miller

Keeping Trails Safe, One Tree at a Time

Ed Miller may not be an expert on climate change, but he knows better than most what is happening on Stowe's trails day-to-day.

A member of Stowe Mountain Rescue, trail chief for the Catamount Trail in Stowe, a member of Stowe Nordic's board of directors, and SLT's 2023 Volunteer of the Year, Miller is as adept with his chainsaw as he is at navigating Stowe's backcountry.

Outside of major weather events that make headlines, Miller says he's anecdotally noticing an increasing number of smaller, very localized events, such as over a half dozen trees down in Crawford Forest last summer and a bridge wash out on the Catamount Trail in Edson Woods.

"There are always good years and bad years," he said, "but it does take more effort to keep trails open these days. Even if it's a small tree, six inches off the ground—if it's covered with snow and your skis go underneath, it's really dangerous."

Ed is part of SLT's team of dedicated volunteers. Want to join our "Stew Crew?" Sign up at stowelandtrust.org/support/volunteer.

2023 Highlights

Thanking you—the changemakers!

Last year, more than 1,000 people like you made a difference for the places you love. Visit stowelandtrust.org/donors to view our full donor list.

Your impact

86 acres of forestland conserved in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor. Thank you for helping protect vital connections for wildlife moving between the Worcester Range and the northern Green Mountains.

Launched Stowe Land Trust's new 5-year strategic plan. Our plan uses the power of land conservation—in both traditional and new ways—to enhance quality of life for everyone with a connection to the Stowe area.

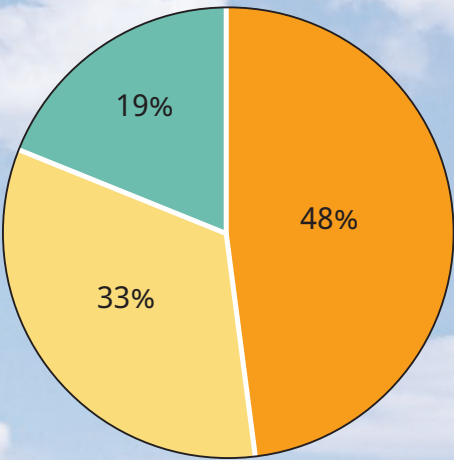
800+ people engaged on the land. From educational workshops to benefit concerts to volunteer days, it has been a fantastic year for connecting the greater Stowe community to something more.

Helping every kid be an outdoor kid. Thanks to an expanded collaboration between Stowe Land Trust and the Stowe public schools, more kids are getting outside.



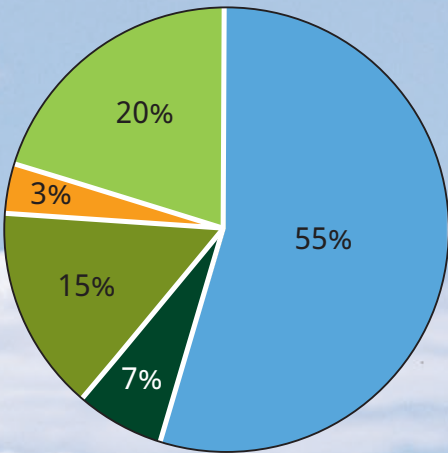
Uses of Funds

- Land Protection & Stewardship
- Management & Administration
- Fundraising & Membership Development



Sources of Funds

- Individual Donors
- Hospitality Partners
- Grants
- Events
- Investment Income



Financial Statements Stowe Land Trust’s fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30. We conduct an annual review of all financial data. This review and our IRS form 990 are available on our website and by request.

New Report Finds Housing “Short on Supply, Long on Price”

This spring, Stowe Land Trust collaborated with numerous regional partners to complete a housing needs assessment for Lamoille County and Hardwick. The final report, now publicly available at lamoillehousing.org, will help to inform community discussions and public policy around housing. Among the key findings:

- Employers struggle to find workers to fill available positions; this is exacerbated by the housing market, which currently provides little opportunity for new workers to move to the region.
- Driven by climate change and the pandemic, the region’s population grew at 2x the statewide population between 2010 and 2022.
- Like most of Vermont, the region has a rapidly aging population.
- Housing stock in the study region increased at a significantly faster rate than Vermont’s between 2000 and 2022, with the number of owner-occupied units increasing at a faster rate than rental-occupied units.
- Region-wide, short-term rentals account for 25 percent of housing stock. However, this ranges as high as 58 percent in Stowe.
- The majority of new housing development occurred in Morristown and Stowe. While Morristown’s new housing is primarily focused on the year-round market, Stowe’s housing is focused on seasonal and short-term rentals.
- A moderate-income household attempting to move to Lamoille County finds a combination of nominal availability and pricing that is not affordable.



Housing Study Collaborators

Lamoille County Planning Commission

Lamoille Housing Partnership

Stowe Land Trust

Lamoille Economic Development Corporation

Lamoille Area Board of Realtors

What does a housing study have to do with Stowe Land Trust?

We know from the pioneering approach of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board that housing and conservation are not mutually exclusive goals—in fact, they are highly compatible.

In support of Stowe's Town Plan, we have been working with Lamoille Housing Partnership to find joint housing and conservation projects since 2018. While our mission centers around protecting farms, forests, and recreationally important properties, we review every project to determine its potential for meeting these dual goals. Per the Town Plan, considerations include connections to town water and sewer, access to public transportation, and proximity to grocery stores and health care. To date, the right property has not become available, but we will keep looking!



**Working together, we
can encourage compact,
vibrant town centers
while maintaining healthy
natural landscapes.**



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Chances to Connect

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events



Bark to Branch: Tree ID Workshop

August 7, 3 – 5pm

Join Stowe Land Trust for an informative and interactive outing focused on tree identification with Lamoille County Forester Emily Potter and Protection Forester Chloe Sardonis from the Dept. of Forest, Parks & Recreation.



Annual Meeting & Celebration

September 8, 2-5 pm

Our Annual Meeting is your chance to come out and celebrate our community with your friends, family, and neighbors. Fun, games, and food for all ages. Everyone is welcome!

Visit stowelandtrust.org/events for our full calendar!