

Mountain Views

News from Stowe Land Trust

Fall/Winter 2019

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Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor

Connecting the Worcesters to the Greens



An initial round of new land protection projects have been completed in the corridor including 63 acres owned by Chris Curtis and Tari Swenson on North Hill (left), 10 acres on Route 100 previously owned by the Lackey Family (center), and 287 acres owned by Dale and Eric Smeltzer in Waterbury Center (right).

The future of the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor is now a little more secure thanks to the vision and generosity of a group of local landowners who have stepped up to permanently protect their land for wildlife on the move.

The “Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor” crosses Route 100 on the Waterbury-Stowe town line and is the only viable connection between the Green Mountains and Worcester Range. It is one of the five most important wildlife crossings in the state and a critical part of an international network of connected forest habitats in the northeast. Together with other local, statewide, and regional partners, Stowe Land Trust has been part of an effort to study and protect the corridor since 2010.

With support from private donors and foundations, Stowe Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and Vermont Land Trust worked together over the past year to create a \$500,000 Catalyst Fund to cover acquisition and project costs associated

with helping interested owners of high-priority parcels within the corridor protect their land. Securing funding and connecting with willing landowners has allowed conservation efforts to move from planning and outreach into taking action.

“It has been fantastic to see the initial enthusiasm and support from these early adopters and investors for protecting this important wildlife corridor,” said Kristen Sharpless, executive director of Stowe Land Trust. “We hope that the success of this kick-off effort will be an inspirational catalyst for additional conservation work that is needed to protect this threatened and critical area.”

Landowners Take Action

1 The first project to launch the collaborative effort was the purchase of a 10-acre parcel (Map #1) whose significance is measured by geography rather than size. Purchased by The Nature Conservancy from Frank and Ann Lackey, the tract is one of the few remaining undeveloped parcels with frontage on

continued on page 3

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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

Letter from the Executive Director



The Western Abenaki tribes have always had a special relationship with the Green Mountains,¹ which include Mount Mansfield (*Mozodepowadso* or “Moosehead Mountain” in Abenaki²) and the Worcester Range. Historically, Abenaki sought refuge from war and invasion in mountains’ remote slopes, quarried stone for making tools, made spiritual pilgrimages to alpine summits, and hunted and gathered food and medicinals, which some tribal members continue to do today.³

As Stowe Land Trust works with our community and partners to “Keep the Worcesters Wild,” it is for some similar values and benefits: space for quiet solitude; maintenance of high-quality, connected habitat for a diversity of wildlife and plants; room for a variety of recreational uses that can include hunting, fishing, and trapping; opportunity to sustainably harvest wood and other forest products we use in our daily lives; and refuge from the stress and fast pace of modern life, whether obtained by hiking up a peak or admiring the inspiring vista of a mountainside lit with autumn colors.

As we celebrate the protection of Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest (Page 3) and completion of the first land conservation projects in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor (Page 1), it is a good time to remember that these “wild lands” are also “home lands” – for the Abenaki, the families who settled and farmed places like Brownsville and Shutesville, those who came after them, and now for us.

Through conservation we know that we can always find our home in these special places and that we will always have the collective privilege of being stewards of the land. What a gift.

With gratitude,

Kristen Sharpless
Executive Director

¹ US Forest Service. “Green Mountain National Forest - The Original Vermonters.” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmfl/learning/history-culture/?cid=stelprdb5316753> September 19, 2019

² Kevin J. Kelley. “What’s in a Name? Sleuthing a Mountain Called Mansfield.” *Seven Days*. July, 2013 <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/whats-in-a-name-sleuthing-a-mountain-called-mansfield/Content?oid=2243973> September 19, 2019.

³ Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe <https://abenakitribe.org/>

Join or Renew Your Membership Today!



Land conservation is essential to our community’s health and wellbeing. With your support, Stowe Land Trust can preserve our shared values and environment. Renew your membership today at www.stowelandtrust.org/support/join-donate/. Select Become a Monthly Donor and provide SLT with a steady stream of support at whatever giving level works for you. You can change your pledge at any time by calling our office at 802-253-7221. Thank you for your support!

Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor *continued*

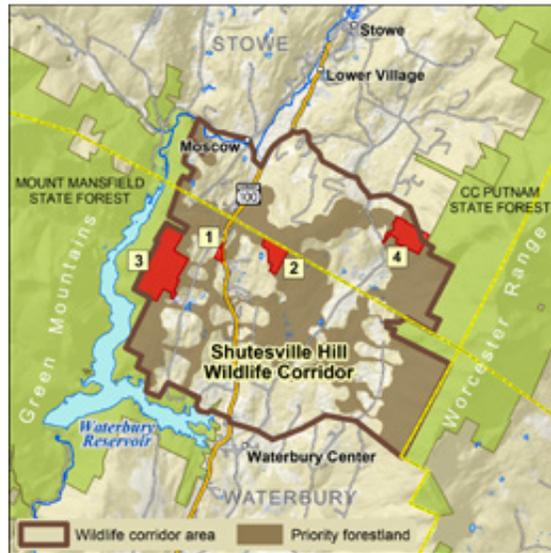
highly traveled and fast developing Route 100 within a small, but critical road crossing right on the Stowe-Waterbury town line.

2 Chris Curtis and Tari Swenson have lived on North Hill in the heart of the wildlife corridor since 1974 where their children grew up loving the woods, animals and serenity of the land. Chris and Tari sold a conservation easement below appraised value to the Vermont Land Trust on 63 acres (Map #2) of their property, ensuring the land will remain undeveloped. “We know that only by being part of a group of likeminded landowners can a patchwork of animal-friendly forestland be assembled [in the corridor],” said Chris. “We’re grateful that organizations like the Stowe Land Trust and The Vermont Land Trust are working hard for this objective and we’re glad to be a part of it.”

3 Eric and Dale Smeltzer donated a conservation easement to Vermont Land Trust on 287 acres (Map #3) that abut Mt. Mansfield State Forest off of Gregg Hill Road in Waterbury Center. Funds from the Catalyst Fund covered legal and project costs for their donation. “Knowing that we are part of a large region-wide project is very exciting,” said Dale. “Conserving property in this wildlife corridor makes us feel more connected to our forestland—as if we’re now managing it with more purpose for the future.”

The Curtis-Swenson and Smeltzer properties are protected by conservation easements, which restrict development and subdivision in order to keep critical habitat intact, but allow landowners to continue to use their land for compatible uses including forestry and to choose whether or not to post their land. Because their land will remain in private ownership, landowners will continue to pay property taxes.

4 The Stowe Land Trust is also working with the Trust for Public Land on the Hunger Mountain Headwaters



project to conserve a 109-acre property (Map #4) currently owned by Charlie and Gibby Berry nestled up against the Worcester Range in Stowe, and an additional 1800 acres in Middlesex and Worcester. Both of these properties will be added to the adjacent CC Putnam State Forest, and will add quality forested habitat on the eastern edge of the wildlife corridor.

“Conserving these properties was only possible due to generous landowners who are protecting their forestland and wildlife habitat,” said Bob Heiser, regional director for Vermont Land Trust. “We hope that protecting these key properties will

inspire others to consider doing the same.”

The Power of Partnership

The Shutesville Wildlife Corridor Partnership consists of the Waterbury Conservation Commission, Stowe Conservation Commission, Stowe Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Vermont Agency of Transportation, two regional planning commissions, and many community volunteers.

“Conserving these lands is such a gift to our community and wildlife,” said Allan Thompson, with the Waterbury Conservation Commission. “What started as a local education initiative has been bolstered by state wildlife science, propelled by the support of land trusts and conservation organizations, and developed into a productive relationship between diverse conservation partners. I am thankful for the community’s support of wildlife and of this partnership.”

Learn More

Visit www.stayingconnectedinitiative.org/shutesville to learn more about the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership and see our Calendar of Events for upcoming outings and events related to the corridor.

Thank You To Everyone Who Donated!



Stowe Land Trust received 807 donations in support of the Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest conservation project, totaling \$6,037,619, which included a \$5 million anonymous donation through the Vermont Community Foundation and a \$175,000 grant from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. Thanks to the outpouring of support from the Stowe area community, the property was conserved on July 30, 2019, and SLT’s stewardship endowment for the care of all conserved lands was expanded! We are incredibly grateful to each individual who joined us to protect this historic community forest for generations to come.

For public access information and a list of donors to the campaign, please visit our website: www.stowelandtrust.org/conserved/properties/brownsville/

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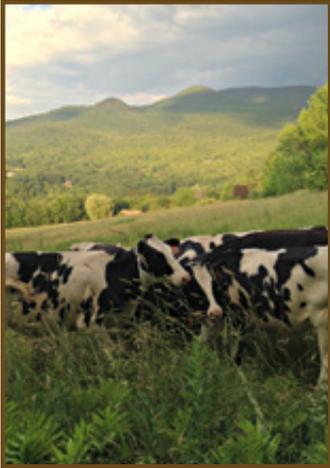
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In Memory of Moogie

Friend of Stowe Land Trust (1)

In Memory of Brian W. Murphy

Friend of Stowe Land Trust (1)

In Memory of Merton S. Pike

Lucene M. Pike

In Memory of George Stearns

William and Anne Chatfield

In Memory of Robert Stengel

Jim and Sally Helin



In Memoriam

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 Stowe Cider Jam for the Land

Grants

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 Spruce Peak Realty
 Town of Stowe
 Vail Resort EpicPromise Program
 Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

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The Stowehof
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 Trapp Family Lodge

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 Stowe Mercantile
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 The Butchery
 The Stowehof
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 Stowe Trails Partnership
 Stowe Vibrancy
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 The Nature Conservancy
 The Trust for Public Land
 Trapp Family Lodge
 Stowe Mountain Resort
 Vermont Land Trust
 VT Department of Fish & Wildlife
 VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
 Waterbury Conservation Commission
 Waterbury Land Initiative

This list includes all donations made between October 1, 2018-September 23, 2019. If we have missed or incorrectly listed your name, please let us know!

🌲 = 5+ Year Donors
 🌲 = 10+ Year Donors
 📷 = 15+ Year Donors
 📷 = 20+ Year Donors
 ▲ = 25+ Year Donors

Welcome New Board Members

Roger Witten has been elected new Emeritus Director of SLT. Roger served on the SLT Board of Directors from 2009-2018. Welcome back, Roger!



Kerry Sedutto

Kerry Sedutto

Kerry, a Stowe native, has been an avid outdoor enthusiast from an early age, enjoying the local trail networks on foot and by bike, golfing, skiing and whitewater kayaking. Kerry has been at the helm of The Sugarman of Vermont for over a decade and also serves on the Board of Directors for the Vermont Maple Sugarmakers Association as well as the Advisory Board for the Community National Bank in Vermont. Kerry was also volunteer coordinator for the Stowe Schools' Friday Ski Program for ten years. Having grown up appreciating conservation from a young age, Kerry looks forward to joining the SLT Board and working to protect the places she loves.

Jason McLean

Jason moved to Stowe in 2008 from Boston, MA where he worked in finance for John Hancock. When he's not at work as director of finance for the Mt. Mansfield Ski Club & Academy, he explores the Stowe area's endless opportunities for hiking,



Jason McLean

biking and skiing with his wife Liz and two young daughters from their home in Morrisville. Jason is also a member of the Mansfield Ski Patrol, Stowe EMS and serves as treasurer of the Stowe Rescue Squad, Inc. He is excited to continue giving back to his community by joining SLT's Board and supporting local conservation efforts.

SLT Bids Farewell to Four Board Members

Stowe Land Trust has been fortunate to have had **Mike Haynes, Nancy Krakower, Bunny Merrill** and **Brian Mullin**, as members of our Board of Directors for the past nine years. Thank you, outgoing Board Members, for your energy, commitment and guidance over the years. We wish you well in all your future endeavors!



Thank You Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust!

Fifty-four Canadian families who love Stowe's natural beauty, rural character, and recreational excellence made donations to Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust over the past year. That's 54% more than last year! Together, you contributed \$50,000 USD to support SLT's land protection and stewardship work, including a contribution to the recently conserved Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest (page 3) and the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor catalyst campaign (page 1). Thank you!

To learn more about Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust and how to make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit www.stowelandtrust.org/support/canadian-friends/



Hillel and Mitzi Becker
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Richard and Elyssa Yanofsky

*CFSLT Board Member

Naturalist Program Completes 7th Season

VHCB AmeriCorps member, **Grace Jia**, recently wrapped up her time with Stowe Land Trust. Through outdoor education programs, Mill Trail open houses, and tabling at community events, Grace interacted with an impressive 956 people, making this our biggest summer of outdoor education yet! Many thanks go to Grace for all of her hard work, and to all of our program partners and participants. We can't wait for next year!



Summer Naturalist, Grace Jia, planting the new pollinator garden at SLT's office.

You Made SLT's 32nd Celebration a Success

On September 22nd, more than 100 people gathered to celebrate 32 years of local land conservation. Following SLT's annual meeting, guest speaker, **Dr. Aron Steward** spoke to the benefits of a relationship with nature, and its ability to heal, especially for those who have experienced trauma in their lives. Activities included flag painting, hayrides, and family portraits by **Sarah Salvas**, followed by delicious food and a cash bar by **Woodbelly Pizza**, pies made by SLT board members, ice cream donated by **Ben & Jerry's**, and live music by the **Sugardaddies** and **Maple Run**.



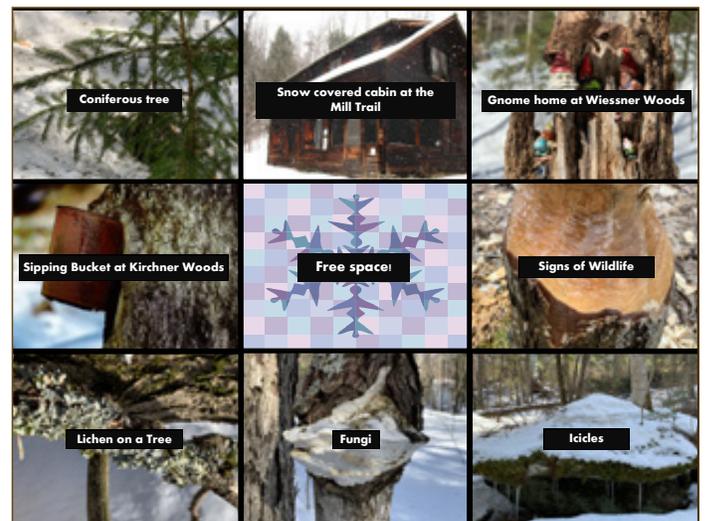
Congratulations to the community members on our Fundraising Committee for Brownsville Forest who were selected as SLT's volunteers of the year: Rich Smith (pictured), Drew Clymer, Liz Lackey, Peggy Smith and Laura Walker.

SLT Explorers' Adventure

Looking for somewhere new to explore with the whole family? Pick up a copy of our Explorer Adventure Map in the office or on our website (www.stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist) and get outside! This fun scavenger hunt leads you to SLT conserved properties all around town. Bring back the completed map and we'll award you a fun prize!



Congratulations to the Galligan Family for completing the first Explorers' Adventure!



Looking for more scavenger hunt fun? Try completing this winter hunt before spring!

20th Legacy Golf Tournament Raises \$37,000 for Stewardship!

The 20th Anniversary Golf Tournament held on August 1, 2019 raised \$37,000 for Stowe Land Trust. This year, all the proceeds from this Legacy event will be added to SLT's stewardship endowment for the long-term care of all SLT's conserved lands. Thank you to our hosts, Alice and Lee Spencer, as well as all our sponsors and participants. Your support makes our work possible! For a complete list of individuals and businesses that supported the tournament, as well as more photos from the event, please visit our website at www.stowelandtrust.org/news



1st Place Winning Team: Tim Sargent (Captain – not pictured), Kevin Whitney, Marcy Royster and Richard Kleiman.

Make a Legacy Gift for the Next Generation

“Conservation projects like Brownsville Forest are the fun part. The ongoing hard work of the Land Trust is the stewardship and care of those special places. That work goes on forever. That is why Millie and I joined the Legacy Society. It is our way to help ensure that Stowe Land Trust will always be able to meet its future commitments.”

– John Merrill, SLT Golf Tournament co-Chair and Emeritus Director



Stowe Land Trust's stewardship endowment will be a stable and reliable source of revenue that will ensure Stowe Land Trust has the necessary resources to protect the investments you have made in protecting amazing places like Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest, even during times of volatility and uncertainty. Thanks to recent legacy contributions to our stewardship endowment from the 20th Anniversary Golf Tournament and successful

land protection campaigns, including the Kaiser Farm and Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest (page 3), our endowment is now 45% funded. Planned gifts made through the Legacy Society support will help to reach our current \$2.5 million endowment goal.

There are many options for how to make a planned gift to Stowe Land Trust that allow you to pass on the legacy of conservation to the next generation. To learn more about the Legacy Society, please visit www.stowelandtrust.org/support/legacygiving or contact Kristen Sharpless at (802) 253-7221.

Legacy Society

Charlie and Gibby Berry
Chess Brownell
Paul Chebator and Mer Zovko
Gunnel Clarke & John De Villars
Kitty Coppock
Richard Levine and Catherine Drake
David and Julie Gladstone
Christine Lengvari

John and Millie Merrill
Tessa Milnes
Joseph and Darsey Moon
Rick Owen
Lucene M. Pike
Charles Tryon
David Wilkens and Molly Pindell
Roger and Jill Witten

Show Your Support!



Our new 5-panel hats feature an embroidered Stowe Land Trust logo on the front and adjustable strap at the back. Made of 100% cotton and available in red, navy, khaki and olive. Stop by our office at 6 Sunset St in Stowe or give us a call at (802) 253-7221 to order.

What's Going On? SLT Outings and Events

For full descriptions and registration information for our outings and events visit: www.stowelandtrust.org.

Managing Your Land For Wildlife

Oct. 15, 7-8 pm, Green Mountain Club Visitor Center, Waterbury Center

A Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor presentation focused on strategies for managing your land, big or small, with wildlife in mind. The presentation will be by VT Fish and Wildlife biologist Andrea Shortsleeve.

Fall Family Hike

Nov. 16, 10 am -12 pm, Sunset Rock, Stowe

Bring the whole family for this annual fall tradition! This year we'll head to Sunset Rock for a quick and rewarding hike to a nice view of Stowe Village and Mount Mansfield.

Moose Status in the Northeast

Dec. 5, 7-9 pm, Green Mountain Club Visitor Center, Waterbury Center

Moose today face many threats from tiny winter ticks to fragmented habitat. Join us for this presentation in our Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor speaker series and learn about how moose are surviving today. The presentation will be by UVM PhD candidate Elias Rosenblatt.

Winter Tree ID

Jan. 11, 10-11 am, Wiessner Woods, Stowe

Join local logger and SLT Board Member Jed Lipsky for a walk through Wiessner Woods. Along the way we'll learn how to ID trees of every variety using clues in their bark, branches, and buds.

Nordic Ski in Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest

Feb. 15, 10 am - 12 pm, Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest, Stowe

We'll explore the ungroomed hills and valleys of Stowe's most recent conservation project by ski! Led by SLT board members, this community event will connect you to both the land and the community here in Stowe. Previous experience skiing and backcountry nordic skis are required.

Moonlight Snowshoe in Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest

March 6, 7-9 pm, Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest, Stowe

Join us for an after work outing to Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest. Take this opportunity to embrace the darkness of winter by joining SLT board members on a snowshoe through the moonlight. Cloudy or clear weather, you won't want to miss this event!

www.stowelandtrust.org
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