

# Mountain Views

News from Stowe Land Trust

Spring/Summer 2016

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*Intact working forests that are managed for timber and other forest products also work for us to provide a host of other benefits and ecological services from world-class recreation opportunities and tourism dollars to clean water and flood control.*

*Photo courtesy of Richard Levine: Kayakers enjoy a spring paddle through Sterling Valley's forests along Sterling Brook.*

## Stowe's Forests Protecting the Integrity of our Greatest Natural Asset

At 85% forested, Stowe is rich in forests. They are one of our most important assets, anchoring much of what makes Stowe a great place to live, work, and visit. Just look around. If you love our town's mountain views, stunning fall colors, steaming sugarhouses, endless trails, and abundant wildlife - not to mention clean water and air - you can thank our forests. And - perhaps more importantly - you can thank the people who own and care for them.

How secure are the benefits we all enjoy from Stowe's forests? Due to a combination of forethought, generosity, and geography, 60% of Stowe's forests are publicly owned by the Town of Stowe

or State of Vermont. Think Cady Hill Forest, Sterling Forest, and Mount Mansfield and C.C. Putnam State Forests. The rest are privately owned by individuals, families, and organizations. Approximately 70% of the eligible parcels in the Stowe area<sup>1</sup> are enrolled in Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (UVA) Program. The UVA program helps to keep privately owned working forests intact and well-managed by providing a tax incentive and requiring a management plan. However, land can be withdrawn from the UVA Program, and only 13% of the Stowe area's private forestlands are permanently protected from subdivision and development with a conservation easement.

*continued on page 3*

<sup>1</sup> In this case, the "Stowe area" refers to Stowe and a 2-mile radius to the north and south in Waterbury and Morristown

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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 Chairman



Dear Supporters and Friends,

It's an enjoyable task to update our members when we have such terrific news – and the first quarter of 2016 at Stowe Land Trust has been a memorable one, with land conservation front and center.

Our marquee land project, Kaiser Farm, has successfully cleared our fundraising milestone. Together, we raised more than \$372,000 to purchase an agricultural easement on the property - the last working farm in beautiful Nebraska Valley. This project is the first Farmland Access project in Lamoille County, and brings us into a new era of land conservation. At the Kaiser Farm, we are both preserving open farmland and keeping the land affordable for the next generation of farmers. This is forward thinking conservation, and we are delighted to have the community beside us in this effort.

We also recently released our new Strategic Conservation Plan. This plan summarizes nearly three decades of conservation and planning work here in Stowe, and provides us with a new baseline of valuable resource documentation as we move into the next generation of land conservation. With this plan, we are now best equipped to continue to deliver on our mission to protect critical lands throughout the greater Stowe area.

These two recent successes are the result of the hard work of our board, our staff, our partners, our members, our volunteers and the community. Thanks to you all for your tremendous contribution. We look forward to continued collaboration in keeping Stowe a beautiful and healthy mountain community.

Sincerely,

David Norden  
Chair, Board of Directors



# Stowe's Forests – continued



Forest fragmentation is the breaking up of forests by roads, agriculture, utility corridors, and other human development.

Although much of Stowe's forestland may look like an unbroken expanse from our favorite vantage points, it is often made up of many different ownerships. In some places, Stowe's forestland has been significantly fragmented - or broken up by roads, agriculture, utility corridors, and other human development. Stowe's Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay Zoning District provides substantial protections for our forests' scenic qualities, which makes the extent of development in some of our forests hard to see. A bird's eye view of some neighborhoods can reveal a surprising number of homes, driveways, and lawns perforating what we may think of as remote forestland.

Forest fragmentation has been identified as a top threat to the future of Vermont forests and all the benefits they provide<sup>2</sup>. This issue is getting increased attention statewide as leaders and lawmakers realize both how valuable and vulnerable our forests really are. During the 2016 session, seven bills designed to help



Many native wildlife, such as this Ovenbird, are negatively affected when their habitats become noisier and home to more predators and competitors due to forest fragmentation. Photo: Chuck Gangas.

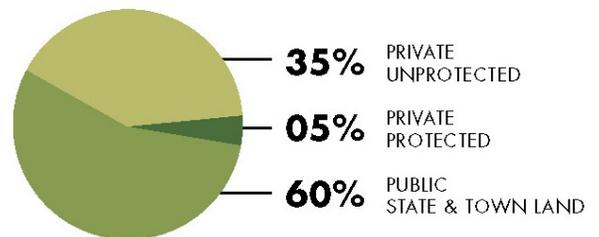
keep forests intact, healthy, and productive were taken up by the Vermont Legislature. In addition to changes in state laws, policies, and standards for practice, options for promoting forest integrity include education and outreach, landowner incentives, local land use planning tools and strategies, promotion of our forest-based economy, and additional permanent land protection.

Since 1987, Stowe Land Trust has protected more than 2,800 acres of productive forest that will remain intact forever. Working forests, forest habitats, and critical forest connectors for both wildlife and recreation continue to be strong conservation priorities for Stowe Land Trust and the Stowe community. In February, we released a new Strategic Conservation Plan that describes the importance of Stowe's forests and other natural resources and priorities for future land protection work (see article on Page 6).

Stowe's most important forests are:

- 🌲 Part of large, intact forest blocks such as those that span the Green Mountains, Sterling Ridge, and the Worcester Range.
- 🌲 Within important wildlife corridors, such as the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.
- 🌲 Part of ownerships large enough in size to support viable forest management.
- 🌲 Growing on productive soils and sites.
- 🌲 Under sound forest management.

## STOWE'S WORKING FORESTS

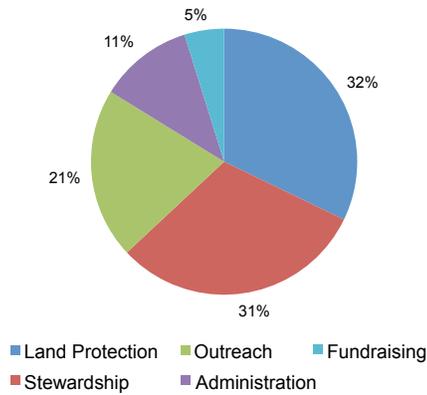


The new Strategic Conservation Plan shows that we have done much to protect our forests and the benefits they provide. However, our work is not yet complete. There are still important forests that are at risk for being subdivided, developed, and fragmented and key connectors that could be lost or closed. We invite you to join us in celebrating, enjoying, and continuing to protect our community's forests so that they will remain intact, accessible, and beautiful for years to come.

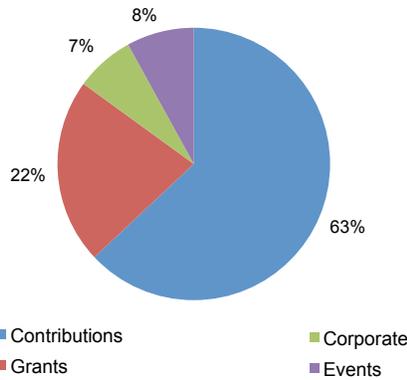
<sup>2</sup> Source: 2015 Vermont Forest Fragmentation Report to the Vermont Legislature. April 2015. Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

# Annual Report FY'15

Uses of Funds



Sources of Funds



## Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

For the Year ended September 30, 2015

### Assets

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cash & Other Assets          | \$41,701           |
| Investments                  | \$803,333          |
| Building & Land Improvements | \$87,723           |
| Land                         | \$2,125,040        |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>\$3,057,797</b> |

### Liabilities

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Accounts payable | \$3,054         |
| Accrued expenses | \$10,754        |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>\$13,808</b> |

### Net Assets

|                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning Net Assets            |                    |
| Unrestricted & Board Designated | \$474,450          |
| Temporarily Restricted          | \$397,999          |
| Permanently Restricted          | \$2,171,540        |
| Net Income                      | \$72,111           |
| <b>Ending Net Assets</b>        | <b>\$3,043,989</b> |

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** **\$3,057,797**

### To Our Supporters:

Stowe Land Trust (SLT) has worked to conserve the most special places in Stowe since 1987--protecting spectacular viewsheds, extensive trail networks, and the working farms and forests that are Vermont's heritage. This important work has been sustained primarily by the generous support of individual donors. Thank you for your support!

SLT's financial records are reviewed annually by Grippin Donlan Pinkham, CPA. A complete copy of the annual financial review may be obtained by request.

## Kaiser Farm Campaign: By the Numbers

**SAVE THE FARM**  
Kaiser Farm, Nebraska Valley, Stowe

**Kaiser Farm Campaign Goal**  
**\$372,000**  
*We made it!*

**Donors to the Kaiser Farm**  
**219**

**85 Laying Hens at the Farm**

**Total Conserved Farmland in Stowe**  
**653 Acres**

**Length of the Miller Brook Frontage Protected**  
**1600 Feet**

Thank you for helping us raise the funds necessary to save the Kaiser Farm.

Now, with the funds in place, we plan to close the deal in late April. Stay tuned for updates!



Christine Kaiser with Stan and Debora of Mt. Mansfield Creamery at the Farmer's Market and Benefit at The Rusty Nail, which featured 18 vendors, brought over 350 people in, and raised over \$3500 for the Kaiser Campaign.

# SLT Updates

## Poo Crews Take 2

A big thanks to **Sheila Goss** and **Marie Kingsbury** for serving as our Poo Crews at Kirchner & Wiessner Woods this winter! This was the Poo Crews' second season of monitoring and promoting pet waste pick-up along these trails. Although Sheila and Marie's monitoring results showed that we weren't able to meet our Zero Waste goal and counts were up from last year early through February, total piles counted were reduced – especially at Kirchner Woods. This year's short and mild winter likely made it less likely for piles to be lost in deep snow than last season, but we think and hope that lower overall counts are also due to more people picking up and packing out their pets' waste. Thank you to those of you who are doing your part to keep Stowe's trails, waterways, and woods clean!

## New Volunteer Stewards Join Team

Over the past year, we've been excited to welcome several new Volunteer Land and Trail Stewards to the SLT stewardship team including **Gordon Dixon**, **Chuck Gangas**, **Walt Looney**, **Chess Brownell**, **Marie Kingsbury**, **Sarah Ford**, **Justin LaPointe**, **Ted Thorndike** and **Eli Mihan**. These important volunteers help keep SLT lands and trails in great shape through regular monitoring and maintenance. Interested in becoming a Volunteer Steward? Visit our website for a job description or contact Kristen at [kristen@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:kristen@stowelandtrust.org)



Volunteer Land Steward, Rick Watts, helps mark boundary lines at Mill Trail.

## Let There Be Light

Historic preservation, modern technology, and workforce training came together to bring light to Stowe Land Trust's Mill Trail cabin last autumn. Recently restored, the cabin is currently home to Stowe Land Trust's Summer Naturalist Program which educates and connects people of all ages to natural and cultural history during the summer months (see page 6).



Students mount light fixtures in the Mill Trail Cabin interior.

However, without lighting, visitors missed out on getting a good look at the cabin's beautiful stone and woodwork, hand-forged hardware, and other architectural details. To keep the cabin off the grid but without keeping visitors in the dark, solar panels were a natural and environmentally responsible choice. SLT partnered with the Green Mountain Technology & Career Center's Electrical Technology Program to design and install the lighting system. Led by master electrician and instructor, **Dana Jourdan**, a small team of high school students gained real-world work experience that will help prepare them for career opportunities in the electrical industry. The result was a functioning and minimalistic solar panel, a group of empowered students, and an ongoing educational tool for the Tech Center and the Summer Naturalist program!

## Can We Bring Maple Sugaring Back to Kirchner Woods?

Six students from UVM's Rubenstein School for Environment & Natural Resources set out to help us answer this question this past fall. Kirchner Woods was home to Jerry Kirchner's sugaring operation on Taber Hill for more than 40 years and could still be managed as a productive sugarbush. However, maple sugaring at any scale is intensive and expensive work. Before rushing out to hang buckets, the students helped us take a practical look at a variety of possible models for setting up a small-scale, educational sugaring operation on the property.

The UVM students researched and provided info to Stowe Land Trust, who concluded that the investment of time, money, and resources needed to set up and run even a small-scale operation is more than we can make right now. However, if the right opportunities arise, it's something we'd like to pursue in the future. Until then, we will continue to manage Kirchner Woods for recreation, big maples, forest health, high-quality wildlife habitat, and other forest products like firewood and timber, leaving the door open for sugaring down the road.



2015 Feasibility Study Team from UVM Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources

# Welcome, Brenna!



SLT is pleased to announce Brenna Toman as our new Stewardship and Outreach Assistant. Brenna, an AmeriCorps member through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, will be coordinating the Summer Naturalist Program and organizing volunteer stewardship events across SLT properties.

A native of the farmlands of New Jersey, Brenna was brought up to love, explore, and respect the natural environment. Years after learning to forage for green onions and trudging up local creeks, she graduated from Roger Williams University in 2014 with a B.S. in Environmental Science and Chemistry. She has since worked naturalist jobs in parks from Oregon to New York until recently relocating to Montpelier, drawn by family/friends, the Green Mountains, and the conservation attitude of Vermonters. She believes that community involvement leads to a universal understanding of the natural world through exploration, curiosity, and engagement of the senses. Join Brenna at

the Mill Trail Cabin June through early September for our Summer Naturalist program.

## Summer Naturalist Program is back for its 4th Season

On Saturdays from June 18th through September 3rd, our Summer Naturalist, Brenna Toman, offers guided explorations for all ages. These active programs for families and groups of all ages center on topics from wildflowers to geology to streams – all with an emphasis on our connection to the land both past and present. Visitors can stop in to cultivate the wonder that ecology and cultural history inspire through games, art, and free exploration. Weekend programs are free and open to the public. School and summer camp groups can contact us to participate in a guided program during the week or to assist with stewardship projects from trail work to invasive plant control. Contact us today for more information at [brenna@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:brenna@stowelandtrust.org).

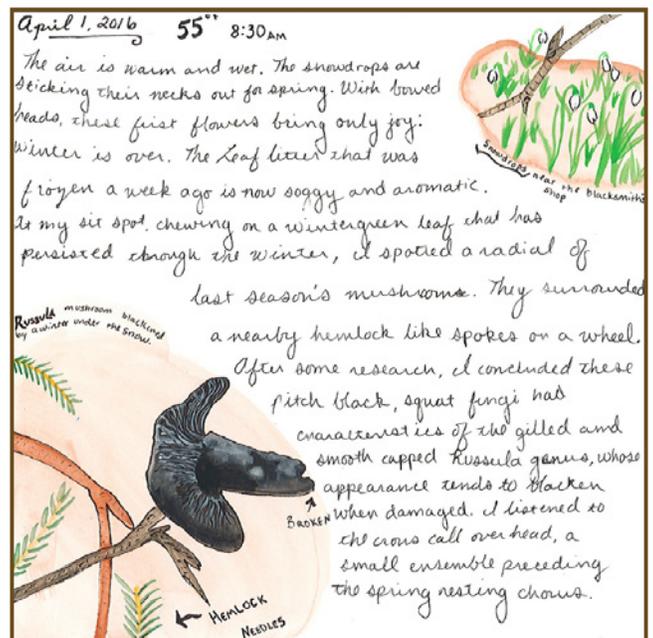


Young explorers discover life in the West Branch of the Little River.

## Follow our New Naturalist Journal

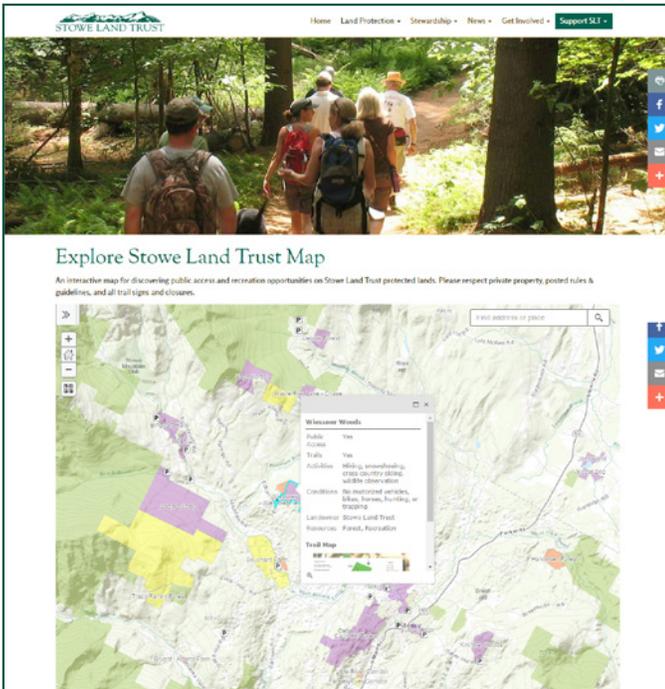
***“There is never a square yard in the forest that does not tell us something about the wildlife within it” –Paul Rezendes***

With some patience and quiet time to sit alone, we can discover the secrets of the forest and its inhabitants. Track the plants and animals of the Mill Trail through seasons of change through our new Naturalist Journal. We will provide weekly updates at the Mill Trail Cabin and online about the flora and fauna and their interactions over time. Stewardship & Outreach Assistant, Brenna Toman, will bring the forest to you with observations, watercolors, and photos. Find out more at [stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist](http://stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist).



# Explore SLT Map Now Online

Find yourself wondering which SLT-conserved properties are open to the public and have trails? Can't remember where you can park to access the trails at Adams Camp? Want to know on which SLT lands hunting is permitted or prohibited? You can now find all this information and more on our new Explore SLT Map – an interactive online map hosted on SLT's website. Visit [stowelandtrust.org](http://stowelandtrust.org) and click "Explore!"



# New Strategic Conservation Plan Released

After a 16-month planning effort, we were pleased to release a new Strategic Conservation Plan in February. The plan is designed to guide SLT's future land protection efforts and to share information about how and where we work with the community and our many partners.

Fragmentation of private farm and forest lands (see the article on Stowe's Forests on Page 1) emerged as a central threat to the future viability of Stowe's working farms and forests, as well as to wildlife and recreational access. The plan's focus on scenic and recreational resources will come as no surprise to SLT supporters. What might be new is the landscape-scale approach to prioritizing critical wildlife habitat and the spotlight on river corridor protection which are conservation strategies designed to respond to the effects of climate change and other emerging threats.

Copies of the plan are available at our office at 699 South Main Street, at community places around town, and on our website: [stowelandtrust.org](http://stowelandtrust.org).



## Help Protect the Places You Love: Become a 2016 Member!

Many thanks to those of you  
who have already sent in your  
donation.



# What's Going On? SLT Outings and Events

For full descriptions and registration information for our outings and events visit: [www.stowelandtrust.com/events](http://www.stowelandtrust.com/events)

## Stalking & Cooking the Wild Onion

Saturday, May 7th, 3:00 PM

Kirchner Woods

Family-friendly foraging adventure with a feast included; all ages welcome.

## Stowe Mountain Bike Club Spring Trail Work Day

Saturday, May 14th, 9:00 AM, Stowe Bowl

Meet in the Stowe Bowl parking lot.

More information at [stowemountainbike.com](http://stowemountainbike.com)

## Craft Brew Race Saturday

May 21st, 12-4:30 PM

Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa

Run or walk this relaxed 5k at noon with a craft brew fest at the finish line for 12:30-4pm (21+).

**Volunteers Needed!** Register online to help out and receive a t-shirt and free entry to the festival (21+ only)

## Trail Maintenance 101

Saturday, June 4th, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Kirchner Woods

Gloves, tools, and snacks will be provided, but bring a pack lunch.

## Birding ID and Habitat Basics

Saturday, June 11, 8:00 AM

DuMont Meadow

Meet at the Town stump dump at the end of Adams Mill Road. No experience required. All ages welcome. No dogs, please.

## Summer Naturalist Program at the Mill Trail

Saturdays, June 18 – September 3rd

Family-friendly exploration of natural and cultural history; all ages welcome.

## Joe's Pond Paddle

Saturday, July 23, 9:00 AM

Bring your own canoe or kayak and other necessary equipment. Meet on Stancliff Road in Morristown.



For more information about an outing or event call 802-253-7221 or email [info@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:info@stowelandtrust.org).

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