

# Mountain Views

News from Stowe Land Trust

Spring/Summer 2018

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## The Year of the Bird

Stowe's mountains and forests are a globally-important habitat for breeding birds, including the Bicknell's Thrush that nests on Mount Mansfield. Photo by Charles Gangas

## Did you know that 2018 is the "Year of the Bird?"

by Kristen Sharpless, Conservation Program Manager

Not according to the Chinese calendar, but in commemoration of the centennial of landmark legislation that changed the course of conservation history in North America. In 1918, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) was passed by the US Congress making it illegal to "pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, possess, sell, purchase, barter, import, export, or transport any migratory bird, or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird, unless authorized under a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior." At a time when numerous bird species had been driven to extinction or its brink by overhunting for their feathers or sport, this law made a significant difference in protecting birds from human harm.

***Although more than 1000 species are now protected under the MBTA, birds and other wildlife face no less serious and much more complex threats to their survival than they did a hundred years ago.***

Today, habitat loss and degradation along with climate change are among the top global challenges to birds and other wildlife. Here in Vermont and Stowe, these threats are very real, making conservation work more complicated than it was in the early 1900s, but no less critical.

### **Landscapes for Birds**

Loss and degradation of habitat on wintering grounds and along migration routes makes Vermont's forests, mountains, and lakeshores a relative refuge for more than 200 species of breeding birds. However, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies recently documented a 14 percent overall population decline in Vermont's forest birds over a 25 year period. These declines are likely due in part to a combination of threats at play here in the northeast including forest fragmentation, invasive species, and climate change. Together, these challenges and others cause a

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Kristen Sharpless, *Conservation Program Manager*  
Metzi Anderson, *Operations Manager*  
Elisabeth Fenn, *Stewardship & Outreach Assistant*

*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

## From the Board Chair



Dear Members and Friends,

I write to you as we transition from winter to spring. We may grumble about the dirt and ruts we find on our muddy roads, but through another lens, it's a sign of the awakening natural world. There's nothing more special about this time of year than the lengthening light of day, the colorful pop of red maple buds, the arrival of spring wildflowers and the musical sounds of bird calls.

Noted Vermont naturalist Bryan Pfeiffer, writing for Northern Woodlands magazine, introduced readers to conservationist Robert Michael Pyle's concern for the "extinction of experience" - 'our gradual forgetting of the familiar, of what grows, swims, hops, walks, or flies here in our backyards and wildlands'. At Stowe Land Trust we regard the possibility of that extinction with serious concern and act upon it.

We're here to guide you in the experience of Stowe's natural world - whether that's enjoying our wooded recreation trails, sampling the vegetables or syrup of a conserved farm, or attending one of our popular Family & Friends outings. We work to demonstrate best management practices in the stewardship of our properties. Simply put, SLT is inspiring and fostering our community's life-long love and appreciation for the land.

A component of past success is our practice of partnering with local, regional and statewide groups to broaden our impact. We're currently participating in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership. Last fall we led a large group of community members on a walk through a section of the corridor to raise awareness of the vital wildlife that cross the busy Route 100 roadway traveling between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range. We'll certainly keep you updated on our progress with this effort.

In the meantime, we hope to see you this spring and summer at our events and outings. Join us in experiencing the natural world of Stowe. After all, it's thanks to your ongoing support that we're able to serve as your guides.

In appreciation,

Chess Brownell  
Chair, Board of Directors

## Introducing SLT Notecards

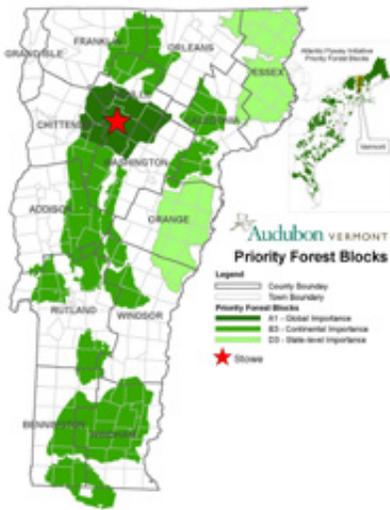
Every purchase increases awareness of SLT's conservation efforts!

Showcasing conserved landscapes in our community, these are perfect for any occasion from thank you notes to birthday cards. Each 8-pack comes with two copies of four different photos along with 8 envelopes. Place your order online at [WWW.STOWELANDTRUST.ORG](http://WWW.STOWELANDTRUST.ORG) or stop by the SLT office at 6 Sunset St in Stowe.



# The Year of the Bird – continued

© Audubon Vermont



complex of problems - from increased nest predation and parasitism to mismatches in the timing of migration and hatching of insect larvae. We can't reverse these declines on our own, but we can do our part to help maintain a connected network of high-quality habitats throughout birds' ranges along the Atlantic Flyway.

Our most critical role in regional conservation efforts is to keep large areas of habitat - primarily forests - intact and connected. This benefits not just migrating and breeding birds, but the whole suite of native biodiversity that exists here now and in a changing climate.

## Forests for Birds

Within large, intact forests and connected lands, not all habitat is equal. In an area of high-quality habitat, birds require smaller territories, allowing more breeding pairs to reproduce successfully than they could in a similar area of low-quality habitat. What makes habitat high-quality? The answer varies by bird but generally, complex forests that have a diversity of tree species and sizes, as well as structures such as downed logs and sunny openings in the forest canopy provide the best habitat overall.

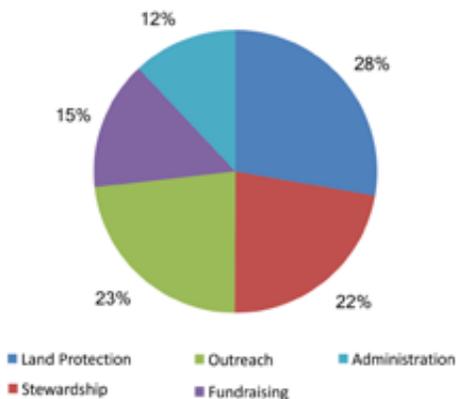
*Stowe is a world-class destination – for birds as well as tourists. We sit in the center of a large block of forest that is globally important to birds as identified by the National Audubon Society. When we act locally to protect forestland along the Worcester Range and the spine of the Green Mountains, our impact extends well beyond Stowe - and beyond birds*

The choices we make in how we use and manage our land affect habitat quality. For example, although we may like the look and feel of park-like woods where every stick and small tree has been cleared out, this landscaped approach to woodland management results in poor habitat for most forest birds. Most of these birds nest in those small trees and shrubs.

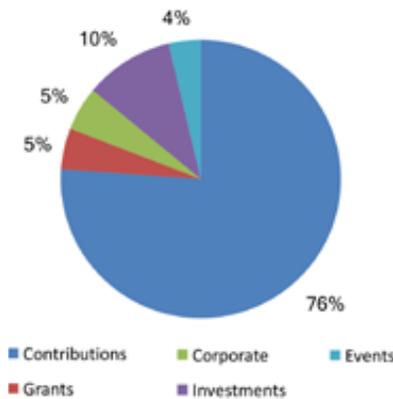
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## Annual Report FY'17

Uses of Funds



Sources of Funds



## Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended September 30, 2017

Assets	
Cash & Other Assets	\$332,048
Investments	\$794,163
Building & Land Improvements	\$102,636
Land	\$2,125,040
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$3,353,887</b>
Liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$7,094
Accrued expenses	\$22,178
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$29,272</b>
Net Assets	
Beginning Net Assets	
Unrestricted & Board Designated	\$805,116
Temporarily Restricted	\$347,959
Permanently Restricted	\$2,171,540
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,324,615</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,353,887</b>

### To Our Supporters:

Stowe Land Trust has conserved over 3,500 acres of land in Stowe, Waterbury and Morrisville 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.

# The Year of the Bird – continued



SLT is working with a forester and logger on a “Forestry for the Birds” project at Kirchner Woods to improve songbird habitat and timber quality.

Want to know about managing your woods with birds in mind? Join an upcoming tour of one of the “Forestry for the Birds” sites here in Stowe including Sterling Forest and Kirchner Woods or contact Rick Dyer, the Lamoille County Forester, at [rick.dyer@vermont.gov](mailto:rick.dyer@vermont.gov) or 802-888-5733 x406.

They perch and drum on downed branches and logs. They nest and forage in standing dead trees and those with cavities. A “messy” forest provides high-quality habitat.

***A diversity of tree species and sizes, gaps and openings in the forest canopy, and dead and downed wood makes high-quality habitat for a large group of forest birds of conservation concern. It may look messy to us, but it is home for the critters we care about.***

Creating high-quality habitat for birds and other wildlife in the woods does not necessarily require a hands-off approach. In fact - depending on location within the landscape - most Vermont forest birds thrive in conditions created through careful management for timber and forest products. Born out of a partnership between Audubon Vermont and the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation nearly a decade ago, the “Foresters for the Birds” project created clear guidelines for foresters on how to integrate timber and songbird habitat management in Vermont forests. Today, numerous examples of “Forestry for the Birds” exist across our region and in Stowe. The Town of Stowe is completing a timber and songbird habitat improvement project in Sterling Forest this spring as SLT is beginning another multi-year project at Kirchner Woods. Whether you own one or 100 acres of woodland, you have the opportunity to benefit birds as you make choices about how to manage your land.

## Backyards for Birds

Birds are not restricted to living in natural areas and on conserved land. Many species spend at least some of their lives around our homes, in our yards, and in other built areas in our community. What can we each do to make these spaces as bird-friendly as possible?



***One of the simplest and best ways to help birds is to grow native plants around your home or business.***

Native plants give birds the food and shelter that they need to thrive, whether they are passing through, nesting, or overwintering.

During breeding season, protein-rich insects make up the bulk of most songbirds’ diets.

You can make sure they have plenty to choose from by having a variety of native trees and shrubs around, which attract insects enjoyed by birds. Hummingbirds aren’t the only birds that enjoy sipping nectar; jewelweed and red elder flowers are visited by finches, warblers, and sparrows too. In late summer and fall, fruits and seeds from shrub dogwoods and chokecherries help birds fatten up for long migrations. Of course, they also like blueberries, raspberries and strawberries - so plant extra! Although bird feeders full of seed are a great way to help and enjoy birds through the winter, you can provide wild foods as well simply by keeping a variety of native trees and shrubs around your home; chickadees and nuthatches will hunt for overwintering insects under the bark, woodpeckers will find larvae in the wood, and finches, sparrows, and grosbeaks feed on the seeds in conifer cones.

*Which native plants are bird-friendly? Check out Audubon’s Native Plant Database, which will give you plants to choose from along with information about which resources they provide - from nectar to seeds to fruits - and which birds they will attract. [www.audubon.org/native-plants](http://www.audubon.org/native-plants)*

## The Next 100 Years

From big to basic, the conservation actions we take today have the potential to help protect birds for the next 100 years and beyond. And when we act locally to protect habitat here in and around Stowe, the positive impact for wildlife can be regional or even global.

# Stowe Land Trust Launches Canadian Friends Organization

Stowe Land Trust has launched a partner organization that can accept donations from Canadian residents of Stowe. Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust will allow Canadian supporters to take advantage of tax deductions in Canada for their charitable gifts for land protection and stewardship work in Stowe.

“We are continuously humbled by the generosity that has allowed this organization to prosper and serve our community for the past 30 years,” said Caitrin Maloney, SLT’s Executive Director. “By creating an avenue for our Canadian residents to support SLT, we hope to better serve these community members who have longstanding relationships and a deep affinity for Stowe and all it offers.” The board

of directors of Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust is led by chair, Clifford Borden. “I am very excited that Canadians who love Stowe, its beauty, and recreational excellence, will now be able to efficiently contribute to maintaining and enhancing the wilderness and rural characteristics of the town they choose for their second home,” said Clifford.

The Trust is now accepting donations to Canadian Friends of SLT. To learn more about Canadian Friends of SLT and how to make a contribution, please visit [www.stowelandtrust.org/support/canadian-friends/](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/support/canadian-friends/) or contact us at 802-253-7221 or [info@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:info@stowelandtrust.org).



Photo by Richard Levine

## You’re Invited to Stowe Land Trust’s 19th Annual Golf Tournament & Summer Cocktail Party

Festivities begin at the Commodores Inn the night before the tournament with the annual Calcutta Social. Guests and golfers 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! On tournament day, the course is played in an 18-hole scramble format with four person teams selected by the SLT Golf Committee. Complimentary cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, and a chance to win great prizes in the raffle are just some of the great reasons to attend this event to support SLT’s conservation work.

**Wednesday, August 1, 2018**

**Calcutta Social**

Commodores Inn

6:00 - 7:30 pm

**Thursday, August 2, 2018**

**19th Annual Golf Tournament**

West Hill Golf Course

Registration 11 am | Shotgun Start at Noon

**Summer Cocktail Party**

West Hill Golf Course Clubhouse

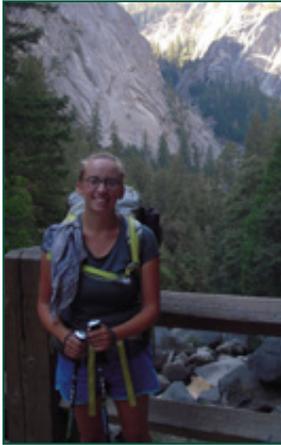
5:30 - 7:30 pm

Play the private West Hill Golf Course - a stunning 9-hole course with sweeping views of the Little River valley – hosted by Lee and Alice Spencer. Space in the tournament fills up quickly - so call or register online today at [www.stowelandtrust.org/events/](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/events/). For more information contact SLT at 802-253-7221 or [info@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:info@stowelandtrust.org).



# SLT Updates

## Welcome, Elisabeth!



SLT would like to welcome Elisabeth as the new **Stewardship and Outreach Assistant**. As a VHC AmeriCorps member, Elisabeth will be serving with the Stowe Land Trust by coordinating the Summer Naturalist Program, organizing volunteers, assisting with outreach and events, and helping

with the monitoring and maintaining of conserved lands. Elisabeth is a happy Vermont transplant and a longtime fan of the outdoors. She looks forward to connecting with the community through the Summer Naturalist Program this year. Check out the calendar of events for programs at the Mill Trail and come say hi!

## Farewell Blacksmith Shop

This spring, we will be saying good bye to the Blacksmith Shop at the **Mill Trail**. Sadly, this small historic camp is beyond practical repair for Stowe Land Trust, so will be dismantled and removed. We will clean up the site where the building stood, create a simple naturalized **picnic area** with interpretive information about the rich natural and cultural history of the area, and **improve the public trail down to the river**.



## Getting the Word Out About Shutesville



Over the past year, SLT has been working with local, regional and statewide partners through the **Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership** to assess and map this critical habitat connector along Route 100 and to identify effective conservation strategies. One of the key strategies is raising awareness about the corridor and what property owners and community members can do to help keep it open and safe. In addition to offering community walks and presentations through and about the corridor, the partnership has created a map, factsheets, and additional information and resources

available at [stayingconnectedinitiative.org/shutesville](http://stayingconnectedinitiative.org/shutesville). Check them out!

## Logging Clears the Way for Trails



Parts of **Cady Hill Forest** look very different than they did before the October 30th windstorm last fall – and they will for a long time. Logging operations were successfully able to clear large sections of the blocked trail network, while also completing some important **forestry work** and helping to offset costs of additional clearing and rebuilding planned for this

season. For up-to-date information on trail **recovery efforts** and opportunities to help out or **make a donation**, visit [www.stowemountainbike.com](http://www.stowemountainbike.com)



If you haven't been to our new office at 6 Sunset Street in Stowe Village, stop by and say hello. We'd love to see you!

# Farewell, Caitrin

Our Executive Director, Caitrin Maloney, will be leaving Stowe Land Trust to pursue a new professional opportunity at the end of May. Caitrin will be working to develop a young non-profit in southern Vermont and expanding recreational opportunities in the region. She has remained with SLT through the initial search process for our next Executive Director and is leaving a strong organization in capable hands during this transition period.

During her 4-year tenure as Executive Director, Caitrin steered SLT through a new period of positive growth and change. Her vision, energy and persistence led SLT to achieve reaccreditation with the Land Trust Alliance; craft a new Strategic Conservation Plan that will guide SLT's next 20 years of land protection work; complete our first farmland affordability conservation project with the protection and transfer of the Kaiser Farm; create the Legacy Society and Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust giving programs; and upgrade our office to a beautiful, central location in Stowe Village. Caitrin's commitment to community has infused her work at SLT. She leaves a legacy of having made SLT a more inclusive organization with strong partnerships that strives to represent and engage with Stowe's diverse and evolving community. We will miss Caitrin, but at the same time we are happy for the opportunities that her new endeavor will provide her. Best wishes!



*Departing SLT Executive Director, Caitrin Maloney (left), with owner of SLT-conserved Hunnewell Meadow, Willard Hunnewell, in 2016. Under Caitrin's leadership, SLT protected an additional three parcels and 100 acres of land critical to the Stowe community.*

*We have begun the search process for a new Executive Director to lead SLT in our next chapter of community conservation work. For more information and a job description, please visit our website [stowelandtrust.org](http://stowelandtrust.org)*

## Make a Lasting Gift: Join the Legacy Society

Why we give – a story from one of our Legacy Society members:

*Many of our family's happy places are found on lands protected by Stowe Land Trust: Cady Hill, Peak-a-View, and Adam's Camp to name a few. Stowe Land Trust has made and will continue to make a tangible impact on our community by helping to protect the landscape that has drawn people here for generations. We hope that with our bequest the Land Trust will continue its mission for those who come to Stowe after we are gone. --Dave Wilkens & Molly Pindell*

See more stories and read about our Legacy Society online:

[www.stowelandtrust.org/support/legacygiving/](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/support/legacygiving/)





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## What's Going On? SLT Outings and Events

### Craft Brew Race & Festival

Sat., May 19th 9 AM - 4 PM at Stoweflake Mountain Resort and Spa

Run or walk in this relaxed 5K with a craft brew fest at the finish line. Entry to the brew fest is 21+. Register online to volunteer! Volunteers receive a t-shirt and free entry to the brew fest.

### Mill Trail History Walk

Saturday, May 26th 10 AM - 12 PM at the Mill Trail Property

Come learn about the history of the Mill Trail and make some fun crafts! Family Friendly.

### Happy Tails & Trails

Saturday, June 2nd 9 AM -12 PM at Wiessner Woods

Celebrate National Trails Day by joining us for a fun event centered on responsible use of public trails with a dog! Marie Kingsbury will be on site giving helpful tips for improving your dog's recall in the woods.

### Kid Friendly Scavenger Hunt

10 AM - 3 PM at the Mill Trail Property

Beat the heat with a water based scavenger hunt in the Little River at the Mill Trail Property. Drop in and stay for as little or as long as you like.

### Nature Photography

Saturday, July 21st 9-11 AM at the Mill Trail Property

Join professional photographer, Mike Hitelman, for a walk around the Mill Trail. Bring your camera and get some tips for taking beautiful pictures!

### Sunset Rock Family Art Walk

Thursday, July 26th 4-5 PM meet at the Stowe Land Trust office

Join Stowe Land Trust on a mellow hike up to Sunset Rock. Enjoy a beautiful view of town and learn about the new trail markers along the way.

### Checking on the Heifers with Ryan

Sunday, August 19th 9:30 - 10:30 AM at Burnham Farm

Come meet the cows and learn about the Percy's dairy operation. Enjoy a beautiful walk around SLT's conserved farm in Stowe Hollow.

### Tree ID Walk

Saturday, September 1st 10 AM - 2 PM at the Mill Trail Property

Learn to identify common trees and dazzle friends with your knowledge just in time for foliage season. Drop in for this informal walk. Kid friendly crafts and games at the Mill Trail Cabin.



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