

# Mountain Views

News from Stowe Land Trust

Spring/Summer 2020

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What Land Means to Us

Annual Report

Hunger Mountain  
Headwaters Conserved



Local schools closed in March due to COVID-19, but nature has remained open for kids and families to access free, healthy, outdoor learning. © Reni King

## WHAT LAND MEANS TO US NOW

By Metzi Anderson

The benefits of conserved land are well-documented. They are places where wildlife thrive; they offer cleaner streams, rivers and lakes by soaking up and filtering runoff; they help reduce the threats of climate change by capturing carbon; they provide open space for people to create their own outdoor adventures; and the list goes on.

But what about in times of stress and uncertainty, like the current crisis we face with the worldwide coronavirus pandemic? Now, more than any other time in Stowe Land Trust's 33-year history, we may find a renewed appreciation for access to open meadows, forested trails, and scenic vistas. Recognizing that everyone's experience is uniquely challenging and different, and that simply finding the time, energy, or opportunity to get outside for some fresh air may be a feat in itself right now, I wanted to share a recent experience of mine and those of some others outside on SLT-conserved land. I am hopeful that we can all find some shared comfort in knowing that the land is here for us now, however we can access and appreciate it.

### **The Land is Here for Us**

I was on a walk in the woods with... myself. It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon, warm in the sun, but a chill wind and patches of snow on the ground reminded me that it was still April. Two weeks had passed since the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order had been issued by Governor Scott and I, like everyone else, was in new territory. As I walked farther up the old logging road, I thought back upon the last two weeks. In a small span of time I found myself adjusting to working from home, my husband finished with his winter job a month earlier than planned, and my sister just managing to catch a flight home from abroad before borders were closed. And while I do relish the occasional wander through the forest on my own, I thought of all of us now unable to see parents, aunts and uncles, friends and neighbors, missing them, and worried for their health and safety.

Despite my lonely thoughts, my spirits began to lift as I heard a winter wren's cascading bubbly notes from through the trees. As I climbed farther up the slope the ground was more snow

*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

# From the Board Chair



Hello,

2019 was a wonderful year for Stowe Land Trust; Hunger Mountain Headwaters, Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor, and Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest. What is special about these land protection projects is the partnership required to conserve the lands. A skilled Stowe Land Trust staff and collaboration were the key ingredients to the successful year, in addition to our enthusiastic donors.

A recent note from a national partner describes the collaboration and dedication of our SLT staff, directors, and generous supporters; "...wrapping up the 5-year Hunger Mountain Headwaters project, after the addition of the 109 acres in Stowe...was a fantastic example of a three-way partnership that worked smoothly, that played to each partner's strengths, with clear communication and cooperation by all every step of the way..." It is an alliance like this that will benefit SLT and ensure more strategic land protection in the future.

This year we embark on another Land Trust Alliance accreditation, first awarded to Stowe Land Trust in 2010. This award offers the assurance that a land trust can keep the promise of perpetuity and that it is worthy of the public trust. It is this forever promise that fortifies our mission to conserve scenic, recreational, and productive farm and forest land for the benefit of the greater Stowe Community.

I write this letter as we are in a Stay Home / Stay Safe circumstance, but I have taken this opportunity to reflect on the beautiful landscape that we all cherish and spend relaxed time with family, with the hope that we may all expand this quality time with more friends and community members very soon.

Sincerely,

Walter Frame  
Chair, Board of Directors

## We are Seeking Re-accreditation

Stowe Land Trust is seeking re-accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance. The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Stowe Land Trust has been accredited since 2010 and is currently seeking its second 5-year re-accreditation term.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Stowe Land Trust complies with national quality standards and may be submitted by email to [info@landtrustaccreditation.org](mailto:info@landtrustaccreditation.org) before July 4, 2020. Please visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org) for more information.



# What Land Means to Us Now – continued

covered and I was delighted to find a big paw print left behind by a black bear; it's big footpad, five toes and claws still clearly visible in the snowpack. Once again, I was reminded that by simply taking a walk in the woods, I was back in control. I could transform my mood and entire outlook on life in a mere half hour. I was on conserved land and I thought how fortunate I was to be able to drive a few miles and step out of my car and into the sanctuary of the natural world. I could forget about the news and the awkward dances in the grocery store aisles for a little while. I wondered who else shared my feelings; who else was finding peace and solace during this uncertain time on our community's conserved lands?

So, I reached out and asked you – our supporters – to share some of your experiences and reflections. Here is some of what I heard.

## Simple Gifts

During week five of social distancing, **Peggy Smith** was walking along Brownsville Road with her granddaughters, reflecting upon spring as a season of hope, change, and rebirth. "I was watching spring come to Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest. It shows us that despite it all, the land is celebrating the start of new growth." She also mused on how just a short while ago, an anonymous donor along with hundreds of supporters and partners, made it possible to protect these 750 acres of undeveloped woodland – Stowe's last remaining large, intact forest. "I am so lucky to live here where this land and the other Stowe Land Trust properties give us the gift of space, good air, beauty and peace."

## Hopeful Spring

**Kelly Murphey** resides with his wife **Rachel Fussell** in Stowe Hollow on the SLT-conserved H.D. Burnham Farm. Both are avid outdoor enthusiasts and expressed their appreciation for the endless recreational opportunities conserved lands provide, but also pointed out that "the ability to connect with the natural world and observe the early signs of spring" is what is keeping them grounded during this time of uncertainty. "At the H.D. Burnham Farm, the apple trees are starting to bud, the wild ramps are looking ready for harvest and the birds are out in full force." While many of us feel an underlying current of anxiety about the coming weeks and months ahead, we can all



find comfort in following the dependable, beautiful unfolding of spring.

## Staying Connected to What Matters Most

**Sherri Trietley** expressed the sense of belonging that she feels when out experiencing the trails, woods, and rivers that Stowe Land Trust has conserved. She and her husband **Paul** reside in western New York state and have a second home in Stowe. "Being able to snowshoe and ski the trails, we have become acquainted with new forests, mountain views, streams and farmland through a mutual respect for invaluable, limited resources such as these. The common goal of conserving land for future generations to enjoy in times of need is as important as ever," she added "and succeeds in bringing us together when apart during this time of isolation and social distancing."

## School is Closed, but Nature Stays Open for Kids

Inspiring the next generation of conservationists continues to be at the core of Stowe Land Trust's mission and while schools are closed many parents are turning to the outdoors as a classroom for healthy learning and growth. As the mother of two very high energy and active boys, **Reni King** is grateful for their "ability to get outside every day and explore the woods". Conserved lands are the perfect place for outdoor play, exploration and learning for kids of all ages. Reni added that getting outside daily "has become critical to our wellbeing," a view shared by many of us.

## A Place to Come Home To

The common thread weaving many peoples' feelings and experiences was a sense of gratitude. Gratitude for access to the forests and fields and the calm that can be found in nature, and gratitude for the people, past and present, who worked hard to provide access to these lands. Now that her two sons, Cameron and Graham, are home **Deborah Taylor** is especially grateful that her children grew up here, "looking out over these lands, exploring these trails, and that they have this place to come home to - especially now". Her family has been enjoying Sunday morning walks, observing signs and sightings of the animals and birds who also find refuge on conserved lands. She expressed

# What Land Means to Us Now – continued

her deep gratitude for “the work of the Stowe Land Trust staff, board members, donors, and volunteers who make this and so much more possible”.

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This public health crisis has shown us that a little bit of nature goes a long way for our well-being, and that land conservation is the key to protecting our community’s natural environment and our shared values. As we navigate the uncertainties before us, we are grateful for the long-term investments you and every SLT supporter have made in protecting and caring for the Stowe area’s farm, forest, and recreation lands. These investments are paying daily and exponential returns; never before has land been more important to our community as we turn to the outdoors to sustain our mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. And thanks to you, Stowe Land Trust is in a good position to weather this challenge. We will get through this together.

Metzi Anderson grew up in Stowe and currently lives in Stowe Hollow. She has served as SLT’s Operations Manager since 2014.

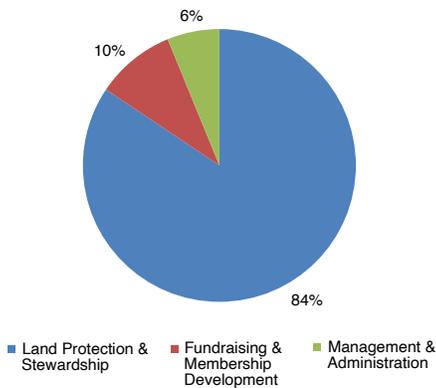


© Tom Rogers

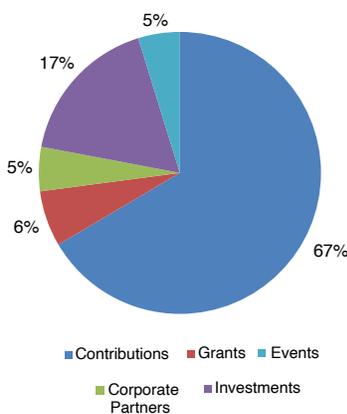
Please recreate responsibly during COVID-19!  
For the latest guidance and information on trail closures,  
visit [www.stowelandtrust.org](http://www.stowelandtrust.org)

## Annual Report FY‘19

Uses of Funds



Sources of Funds



Note: For display purposes, charts do not include \$5 million contribution made for the purpose of Land Protection and Stewardship that was used to protect Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest and grow SLT’s stewardship endowment.

Stowe Land Trust has conserved over 4,300 acres of land since 1987--protecting spectacular viewsheds, extensive trail networks, and the working farms and forests that are important to the Stowe area community. We have also collaborated with partners to conserve an additional 2,200 acres in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor and along the Worcester Range. This important work has been sustained primarily by generous contributions from individuals. Thank you for your support!

### Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended September 30, 2019

<b>Assets</b>	
Cash & Other Assets	\$1,344,400
Investments	\$1,056,243
Building & Land Improvements	\$95,449
Land	\$2,125,040
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$4,621,132</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable	\$3,189
Accrued expenses	\$31,003
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$34,192</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Without Donor Restrictions	
Undesignated & Board-designated	\$1,131,740
With Donor Restrictions	\$3,455,200
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,586,940</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,621,132</b>

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.

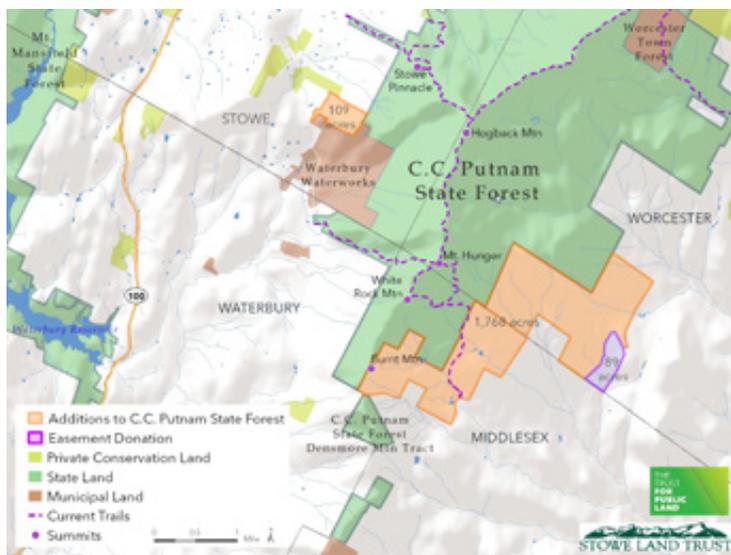
# Hunger Mountain Headwaters Conserved!

We are pleased to announce that the wildness of the Worcester Range is now more secure thanks to the successful completion of the Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project on March 30.

This landscape scale initiative has been a multiyear and multimillion dollar effort shared between Stowe Land Trust, the Trust for Public Land and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to add nearly 2000 acres of high quality forestland in Stowe, Middlesex and Worcester to the C.C. Putnam State Forest. The new additions protect the viewsheds from Hunger Mountain and Stowe Pinnacle, public access, water quality, critical forest habitat, and opportunities for productive forest management.

SLT's investment in this big conservation effort reflects how much the greater Stowe community values the vastness and undeveloped character of the Worcester Range – even the portions that fall well outside Stowe's town boundaries.

This project was made possible by the vision and generous action of Stowe landowners, Charlie and Gibby Berry, as well as by funding from the federal Forest Legacy Program, the Ernest E. Stempel Foundation, the Conservation Alliance, the Mill Foundation, the Larsen Fund, S&C Harvest Foundation, the MacLeay Foundation, the Lintilhac Foundation, Pinnacle Outdoor Group, the Oakland Foundation, Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust, and 109 private individual donors.



Map of the Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project

To learn more about the Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project, visit [www.stowelandtrust.org/projects](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/projects)



Hikers looking towards Middlesex from the summit of Hunger Mountain

## Save the Date! 21st Annual Golf Tournament

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. We are hopeful the annual golf tournament will take place, but the health and safety of our community, participants, and SLT staff is our biggest priority and will be the guiding force in the final decision to host the event. We will provide further updates as soon as they are known. We are hopeful to see you in early August!

Please save the date and reserve your place in the tournament today at [www.stowelandtrust.org/events/](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/events/) or contact Brooke Mitchell at 802-696-2251 or [info@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:info@stowelandtrust.org).

**Thursday, August 6, 2020**  
**21st Annual Golf Tournament**  
**West Hill Golf Course**



# SLT Updates

## Experience Summer with SLT



*Become a Backyard Explorer with SLT*

During the public health crisis, we remain committed to providing educational opportunities which inspire local citizens to engage with the natural world and foster a lifelong appreciation for the land. We are currently exploring new ways to interactively engage with local families, partner organizations, and the land, safely and remotely. We have created a

Backyard Adventure series to encourage learning and exploring right in your own neighborhood. The Backyard Adventure worksheets are available on our Summer Naturalist webpage along with other fun resources and activities created by local partners. [www.stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist.org](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist.org).

## The Big Tree Hunt

To celebrate Arbor Day, the Stowe Conservation Commission partnered with Stowe Land Trust to bring The Big Tree Hunt to the community. Participants were encouraged to look in their backyards or nearby forest for the biggest trees, measure their circumference, and submit their entry online with a photo. The friendly competition aimed to get people of all ages outside and exploring close to home. At press time, SLT was still receiving some impressive entries!



Prizes will be awarded to participants who discover the three largest trees in town, with every participant receiving a SLT compass keychain. To see the winning specimens, check out the *News & Press* page on SLT's website

*One of the entries from this spring's Big Tree Hunt: a contest to find the biggest tree in Stowe. Sponsored by the Stowe Conservation Commission and Stowe Land Trust*

## Stowe Conservationist of the Year Award

The Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership was honored at this year's town meeting as Stowe Conservationist of the Year. The partnership consists of the conservation commissions of Waterbury and Stowe, Stowe Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership is working to keep a critical wildlife corridor open and safe so Vermont wildlife can thrive, now and into the future. The group is raising awareness about the corridor and working to protect it in collaboration with interested landowners and local communities.



*L-R: Christine McGowan (Stowe Conservation Commission), Kristen Sharpless (Stowe Land Trust), Christa Kemp (Vermont Land Trust), Tom Rogers (The Nature Conservancy), John Austin (Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife), and Rob Moore (Stowe Conservation Commission, Lamoille County Planning Commission).*

## Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest Recreation Updates

The VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation, in partnership with Stowe Land Trust and Stowe Trails Partnership, continues assessing and planning recreation improvements in Brownsville. Projects include installing trail counters to gather user data, developing a trail corridor management plan, and hanging trail markers on the open sections of pedestrian trail. This work has been supported by the generosity of the Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust, who last year set money aside specifically for recreation improvement projects on the property. Thank you!



*Blue diamonds mark the open trail network in Brownsville-Story Ridge Forest.*

# Kids Corner!

## To Play:

In the grid, check off which birds you've seen and/or heard this spring!  
See if you can check off three in a row in any direction.  
How many rows of three can you get?

# BIRD BINGO

<p>Canada Goose</p>  <p><i>honk-honk-honk</i></p>	<p>Black-capped Chickadee</p>  <p><i>chickadee-dee or cheeseburger</i></p>	<p>Red-winged Blackbird</p>  <p><i>konk-la-reeeee</i></p>
<p>Blue Jay</p>  <p><i>jeer-jeer-jeer</i></p>	<p>American Robin</p>  <p><i>cheerily, cheer-up</i></p>	<p>Wild Turkey</p>  <p><i>gobble-gobble-gobble</i></p>
<p>Mourning Dove</p>  <p><i>hoo-la-hoop-hoop-hoop</i></p>	<p>American Crow</p>  <p><i>caw-caw-caw</i></p>	<p>Northern Cardinal</p>  <p><i>what-cheer, what-cheer</i> <i>what-cheer purty-purty-purty</i></p>

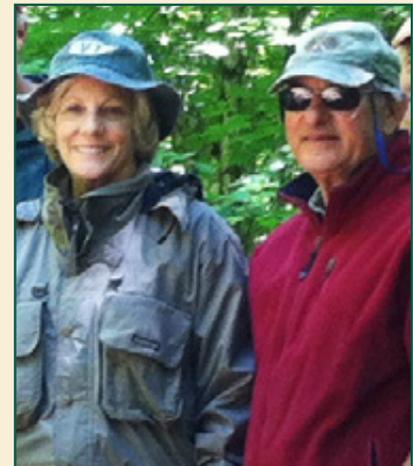
All photographs obtained from Macanlay Library at [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)

Photo credit: Northern Cardinal: © Paul Travers, 2011 | American Crow: © Ryan Schatz, 2012 | Wild Turkey: © Ryan Schatz, 2012 | Black-capped Chickadee: © Scott Martin, 2011 | Red-winged Blackbird: © Jonathan Edwards, 2017 | American Robin: © Ryan Schatz, 2009 | Mourning Dove: © Ryan Schatz, 2014 | Blue Jay: © Billman Colton, 2011 | Canada Goose: © Max McCarty, 2017

## Make a Lasting Gift: Join the Legacy Society

Three generations of our family including our children and grandchildren have bonded with Stowe's natural beauty. We believe it is imperative to conserve this great asset for current and future generations. So, Jill and I decided to do our part by making the Stowe Land Trust a beneficiary in our wills. We see it as a gift to all.

-Roger & Jill Witten



To learn more about the Legacy Society, please visit [www.stowelandtrust.org/support/legacygiving](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/support/legacygiving) or contact Kristen Sharpless at (802) 253-7221.

## 2019 Fall/Winter Newsletter Corrections

### Our Donors

#### Benefactor

Robert and Jana Giordano  
Jeff Herrmann & Jana Ross  
Walter Levering & Carolyn Ruschp

#### Sponsor

Kristen Sharpless & Michael Snyder

#### Sustaining

Tom and Liz Lackey

#### Supporting

Leslie Gauff & Bruce Bell  
Deb and Mike Martin

#### Family

Raymond and Sengdao Bergmann  
Catherine Crawley & Richard Weinstein

## SLT Outings & Events

In-person events will be scheduled as soon as it is safe to do so. Until then, stay up to date with our free online events and offerings by following us on Instagram and Facebook, and checking the events section of our website. [stowelandtrust.org/events](http://stowelandtrust.org/events)

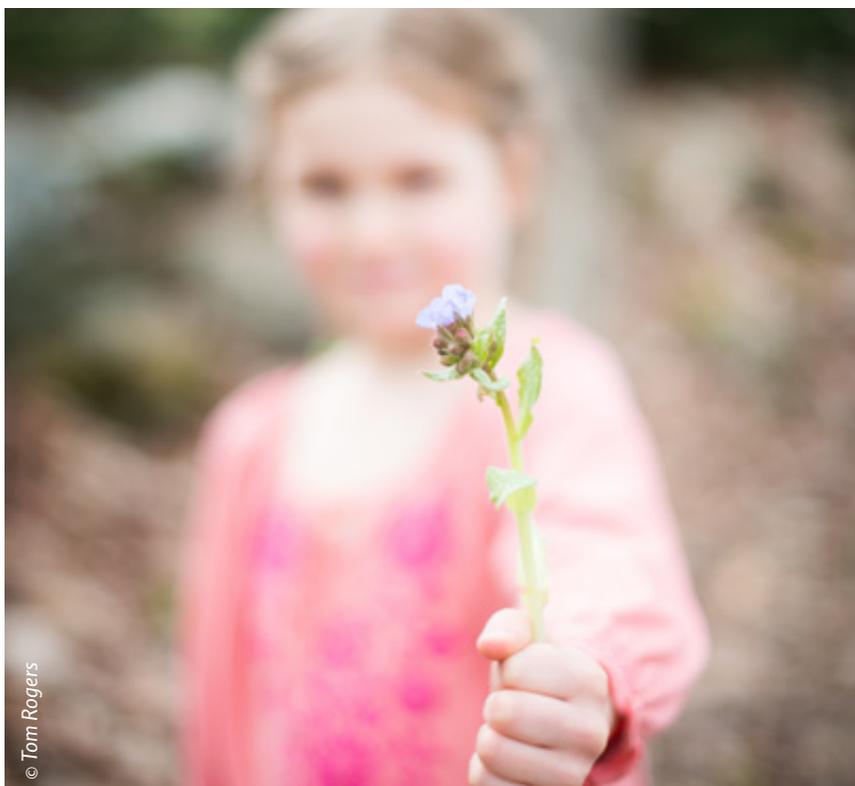
Ideas for fun, backyard activities for the whole family can be found on our Naturalist's Blog: [stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist/blog](http://stowelandtrust.org/summer-naturalist/blog)



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## Thank you for your support



Never before has land been more important to our community.

Your support of SLT helps to ensure that everyone in our community has free and safe access to the outdoors for staying healthy, learning, and playing now and into the future. Thank you!

Please join us or renew your SLT membership today.

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