

# Mountain Views

Quarterly Newsletter of Stowe Land Trust

Spring 2010



## Protecting Land Protects Our Health

The debate over health care reform that has dominated the news in recent months has put us in mind to consider how land conservation relates to efforts to control the escalating cost of health care. Clean water and air, access to recreation and open space, wildlife habitat and the working landscape are all compelling reasons to protect natural and working lands. But how does that contribute to the overall health of our population?

People have long been taking to the outdoors to “get away from it all” seeking a quiet setting to spend a relaxing few days. The benefits from spending time outdoors restoring your physical and mental health were often thought to be unmeasurable despite their importance.

Imagine how your life might be different if you had never gone swimming in a pond, hiked a trail to the top of a mountain or caught fireflies at dusk. Living in Vermont, we take for granted the opportunities to get outside and enjoy nature.

Increasingly, efforts are being made to quantify the benefits of having access to our natural environment and relate that to managing things like escalating health care costs. According to a Corporate Wellness Study for the city of San Jose, Recreation and Parks Department (as cited in *The Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*, 1995), people who exercise regularly have 14 percent lower claims against their medical insurance, 30 percent fewer days in the hospital, and have forty percent fewer claims greater than \$5,000.

In another study, A.F. Taylor and F.E. Kuo (as cited in *Saving Land* vol. 29:2) found that children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Dis-

order (ADHD) can lessen their symptoms with a walk in the park. Children in the study who took a twenty minute walk in natural surroundings experienced a greater decrease in their symptoms than those who walked in a suburban or downtown area.

Since it was founded in 1987, Stowe Land Trust has sought to protect our community's access to the outdoors through the conservation of lands with trails, trailheads, river corridors and open meadows. In many cases, Stowe Land Trust has partnered with organizations representing different user groups like the Catamount Trail Association and the Stowe Mountain Bike Club to ensure conserved lands play a role in protecting recreational resources for the future. Places like Wiessner Woods, Maple Run and Pinnacle Meadow will still welcome those looking to enjoy the outdoors by themselves or with their family for generations to come.

As the nation struggles to trim its health care costs, we cannot afford to overlook some of the programs in place, like local land conservation, that encourage and support healthy communities for years to come.



*Top: A family enjoys the Rec Path with conserved Bouchard Farm in the background. Middle: AJ finds a red eft on the trail. Bottom: Swallowtail butterfly at Pinnacle Meadow.*

*"I love Vermont because of her hills and valleys, her scenery and invigorating climate, but most of all because of her indomitable people."  
- Calvin Coolidge*

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PO Box 284  
Stowe, VT 05672  
(802) 253-7221  
(802) 253-2642 (fax)  
www.stowelandtrust.org  
info@stowelandtrust.org

*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.*

*All contributions to Stowe Land Trust are tax deductible. Please become a member today.*

## From the Executive Director and Board Chair

The volatile and stormy days of spring are harbingers of a renewed season. This year's transition from scorching sun to frigid rain helps remind us that awakenings can be a turbulent time, but can also reinvigorate our sense of adventure. In the spirit of renewal, SLT is proud to announce that it has been freshly minted an Accredited Land Trust, affirming our commitment to operate at the highest ethical standard for protecting land.

SLT has always worked to conserve only those places that are critical to our community's natural health and sense of well-being. As we look at the coming season, our role as long-term protectors of these conserved lands has never been more important. For that reason we are highlighting the myriad opportunities to get out and enjoy the lands that we have protected over the last 23 years.

Join us for a work day at Kirchner Woods or a Wildflower Walk at Wiessner Woods. Explore popular destinations like Bingham Falls and Pinnacle Meadow as well as hidden treasures like Page Forest and the DuMont property. For a unique glimpse of some of the lands that we've protected, we invite you to Run for a Reason this year by participating in the first annual Stowe Trail Race Series. See our calendar insert and website for more details!

## Stowe Land Trust Earns National Recognition

Stowe Land Trust is proud to announce that it has been accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

During the nearly 2-year process, SLT submitted reams of material and underwent an extensive, external review of its governance, management policies and systems it uses to protect land.

"Stowe Land Trust's accredited status means that we have met national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands in our community," says Heather Furman, SLT's Executive Director.

"While SLT has established itself as a leader in local land protection, our land trust is stronger today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program. Being accredited is a true measure of the success of our organization."



*Elaine Nichols*



*Alan Thorndike*



**Erin Bruhns promoted to Office Manager**

Ever wonder how SLT manages to send out those timely membership renewals, who puts together those colorful event announcements and politely answers your questions when you call our office? Erin Bruhns is the wizard behind the efficient workings of the SLT office. After 2 ½ years with SLT, Erin has been promoted from Administrative Assistant to Office Manager, reflecting the incredible job and valuable skills that she brings to SLT.



Stowe Land Trust was awarded accreditation this March along with other land trusts from across the country. These land trusts join 82 land trusts that have been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008.

Accredited land trusts are able to display the Accreditation Seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

# Giving Made Simple: Bequests Give Permanent Voice to Conservation Values.

Stowe Land Trust carries with it a long-term vision. That vision ensures that the land we conserve today will remain protected in perpetuity.

As you think about the landscape that has inspired you, the relationships you have with your community, and the benefits of being in the outdoors, you may contemplate how to give a permanent voice to your land conservation values and protect Stowe's finest assets—its working landscape, natural areas, and recreation treasures.

One of the most lasting ways to support the work of Stowe Land Trust is through a simple bequest. A bequest is an outright gift of money, stock or bonds, land, tangible personal property, or other assets, which is made at the time of your death. Your attorney will be the principal advisor in preparing your will or living trust, however we have some suggested wording you might find useful.



***"It is so exciting that we are protecting the natural habitat for generations."***  
~ Christine Lengvari

Christine Lengvari spends her weekends in Stowe at her home on the flank of the Worcester Range where she can walk to the SLT conserved Pinnacle Meadow.

When she thinks about her recent decision to include Stowe Land Trust in her estate plans, she imagines what might have happened to Pinnacle Meadow if SLT had not been there to work with the landowner to conserve the 130 acre property.

By naming Stowe Land Trust in her will, Christine is leaving a legacy for the future in every acre of land conserved by SLT.

SLT is not a tax-advisor and we encourage you to seek professional tax advice before making decisions about your estate.

We would be glad to answer your questions along the way. Please call Heather Furman at SLT: (802) 253-7221 or email: [heather@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:heather@stowelandtrust.org).

STOWE  
LAND TRUST  
*Pinnacle  
Society*

After announcing the launch of the Pinnacle Society at the beginning of the 2010 membership year, we are pleased to report that fifty three donors have already joined.

The Pinnacle Society's first event took place on February 13th at the SLT owned Mill Trail property. Members were led on a tour of Mill Trail and Bingham Falls by SLT Executive Director, Heather Furman. The snowshoe tour concluded at the historic Moravian cabin where cocoa was served in front of a fire in the fieldstone fireplace. We hope you will join us for a hike at our next event held exclusively for Pinnacle Society members on Saturday, August 21st.

By becoming a Pinnacle Society member, the following individuals have shown their commitment to conserving our spectacular natural landscapes for future generations.

Anonymous  
Nancy and Bill Anderson  
Charlie and Gibby Berry  
Paul and Kathy Bosland  
Philip Branton and Ellen Lazarus  
Rick and Ann Bresnahan  
Donna and Jake Carpenter  
The Chingos Foundation  
Kitty and Allan Coppock  
Darrell and Nancy Crate  
Denise Burt Cushwa  
Peter and Deborah Dodson  
Peter and Bari Dreissigacker  
John and Julie Egenberg  
Trowbridge and Claudia Elliman  
Tom and Mary Evslin  
Michael Fenlon and Linda Sallop  
Alan and Irka Golub  
Gerry and Terry Griffin  
Milton Heller, Jr.  
Christopher Hill and Susan Flicop  
Richard and Clea James  
Abby Johnson and Chris McKown  
Cliff Johnson  
Stephen and Sally Kauser  
Frank and Marion Kellogg  
John and Diane Kemp  
Bonnie Knight  
Lefty and Joyce Nichols Lewis  
Clare Tweedy McMorris  
John and Millie Merrill

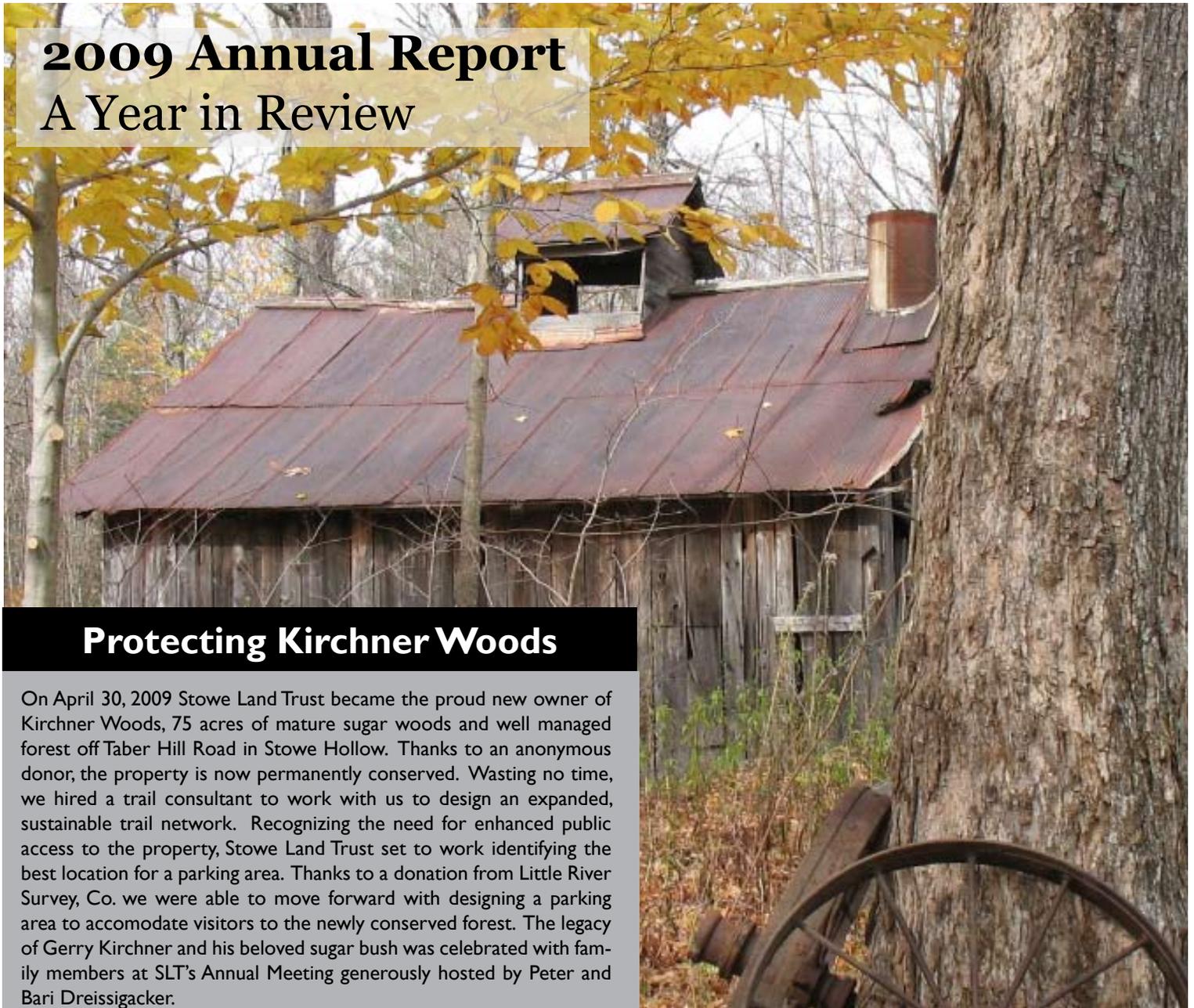
Peter and Bunny Merrill  
Rob and Janice Norton  
Melissa and David Norton  
Jan Nyquist and David Harding  
Dan and Margaret Owen  
Jack and Caroline Patten  
John and Adrienne Peacock  
Gene Posnick  
Michael and Deborah Pucillo  
Gordon and Linda Ramsey  
Nicholas A. Skinner  
Oliver and Gary Slesar  
Richard and Amy Sparks  
Lee and Alice Dana Spencer  
Union Bank  
Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli  
In Memory of Donald R. Webb  
Richard and Sally Watts  
David Wilkins and Molly Pindell  
Roger and Jill Witten  
Norris and Judy Wolff  
Bracebridge and Yuriko Young Foundation

Charter members joining after April 1st will be recognized in the summer issue of *Mountain Views*.

If you are interested in becoming a charter member of the Pinnacle Society, please contact Executive Director, Heather Furman at 802.253.7221 or [heather@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:heather@stowelandtrust.org).

# 2009 Annual Report

## A Year in Review



### Protecting Kirchner Woods

On April 30, 2009 Stowe Land Trust became the proud new owner of Kirchner Woods, 75 acres of mature sugar woods and well managed forest off Taber Hill Road in Stowe Hollow. Thanks to an anonymous donor, the property is now permanently conserved. Wasting no time, we hired a trail consultant to work with us to design an expanded, sustainable trail network. Recognizing the need for enhanced public access to the property, Stowe Land Trust set to work identifying the best location for a parking area. Thanks to a donation from Little River Survey, Co. we were able to move forward with designing a parking area to accommodate visitors to the newly conserved forest. The legacy of Gerry Kirchner and his beloved sugar bush was celebrated with family members at SLT's Annual Meeting generously hosted by Peter and Bari Dreissigacker.



$$S = \frac{p}{t}$$

**stewardship equals  
protection over time**

- Replacement of the cedar roof on the Mill Trail Moravian cabin.
- SLT staff and volunteers completed and documented annual monitoring visits for all 28 properties conserved by SLT.
- Partnered with Audubon VT to connect landowners interested in enhancing forest bird habitat with biologists providing free forest habitat assessments.
- Stowe Land Trust participated in planning efforts for the VT Ride Center and its core network of trails on Adams Camp.
- Installed signage at Adams Camp in an effort to raise awareness of public access to this conserved property.
- Performed boundary maintenance on the DuMont, Wiessner Woods, Mill Trail and Kirchner Woods properties.
- Hundreds of SLT staff hours were spent assisting owners of conserved land with achieving their management objectives.

# Community Outreach

- Stowe Land Trust partnered with the Lamoille County Natural Resource Conservation Service to offer an invasive plant and river management workshop to our members.
- Stowe Land Trust hosted a talk with Bill McKibben about sustainability, global climate change and the importance of local food sources.
- Bats, Biodiesel and the Barnyard was a speaker series hosted in partnership with the VT Ski Museum and the Stowe Free Library.
- Hosted volunteer trail work days at Wiessner Woods, Mill Trail and Kirchner Woods.
- A survey of our membership was conducted to assist SLT in reviewing its organizational goals.
- Several successful events including the Stowe Land Jam, the 10th Annual Golf Tournament, Pie in the Sky's Benefit Bake and Off Piste in the Northeast raised nearly \$40,000 for our operating budget.



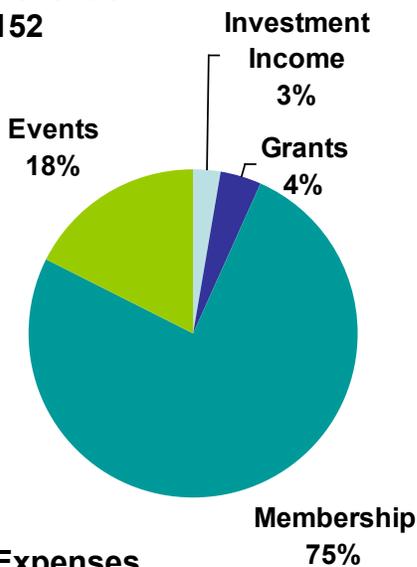
# Financial Highlights

Membership continues to be the driving force behind our operating budget, contributing 75% to our annual operating income. Three quarters of our membership renews each year and we are steadily increasing our membership with 63 new members in 2009. 8% of members in 2009 were friends that had joined again after missing a year or two. Welcome back!

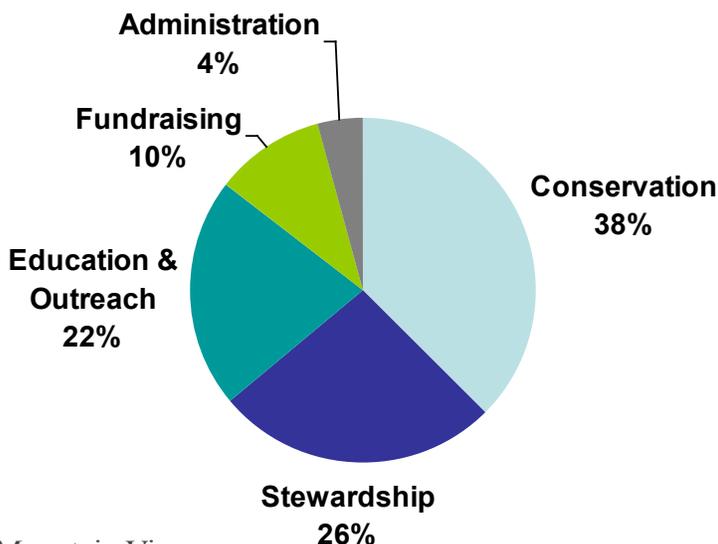
Operating revenue continues to climb at a steady pace with a 19% increase over 2008's actual income. This is due in large part to an increase in membership income. We also received grants from the Town of Stowe and Audubon Vermont. Most notable for 2009 was the leveling off of expenses following the increase in staff capacity in late 2007. Thanks to a tremendous effort by the staff and Board, SLT was able to hold the line on expenses without reducing our services to the public.

As we celebrate our achievements of the past year, we know there are also significant challenges ahead. With the experience we have established over the decades, and the confidence you have given us in recent years, we are better prepared than ever to meet these challenges and create new opportunities to fulfill our conservation goals. And we look forward to achieving those goals together for the benefit of this and future generations.

## Operating Revenue \$210,152



## Operating Expenses \$202,831



### Restricted Accounts Summary

Income	
Grants	\$ 10,055
Investment	\$ 9,606
Land Protection	\$ 994,832
Stewardship	\$ 3,479
	<b>\$1,017,972</b>

Expense	
Land Protection	\$ 912,507
Stewardship	\$ 19,135
	<b>\$ 931,642</b>

# It's Trail Work Time!

When you take the time to think about it - a trail is a powerful thing. We follow where it leads us often without question. Confident it will take us to special views, unique natural features and maybe a relaxing resting place before heading home. We are equally trusting that it will not introduce us to anything that poses a risk to our safety. It is because of this trust we place in trails that Stowe Land Trust works hard to maintain them so they remain safe and fun for visitors. Beginning this spring, Stowe Land Trust will be working with trail builders and volunteers to build and repair trails as well as install signage on several conserved properties.

## Wiessner Woods

This property is visited by dozens of dogs and people every day and needs continuous maintenance in order to ensure the sustainability of its trail system. Each year, a work day is held to do minor maintenance to prepare for the hiking season. Sometimes, however, the trails need a little more attention. The last time a professional trail crew was put to work in Wiessner Woods was 2006. Timber and Stone, llc. has been hired to improve several areas of trail throughout the property starting this spring.

Where the trail enters the woods to the Four Corners is a victim of poor drainage detracting from an otherwise good hiking experience. Stone cribbing and revegetation of the area will remedy the drainage issue and mitigate the trail widening that has happened as a result of the muddy conditions.

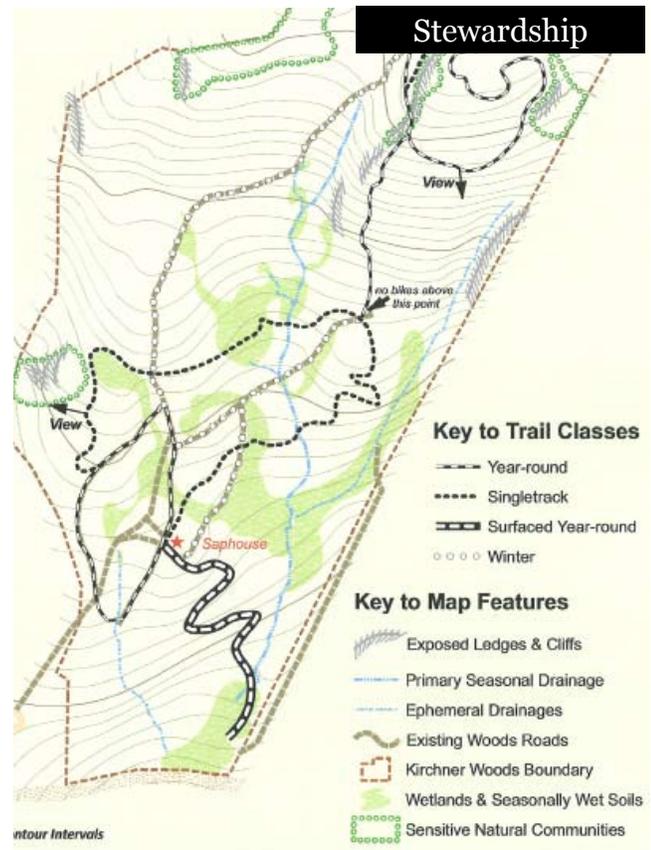
Much of the Meadow Trail with its water crossings and winding turns is in great shape. Beyond the scenic overlook, however, there are several sections of standing water due to poor drainage. Adjustments will be made to the trail to raise the tread out of the wet areas and improve drainage of the trail itself.

Sections of the Hardwood Ridge Trail are heavily used as it meets up with the Catamount Trail and trails

on the neighboring Halvorsen property. In several places between the intersection with Main Street and the sugarhouse, the trail will be raised out of the water to improve drainage.

## Kirchner Woods

Purchased last April, Kirchner Woods is a 75-acre forest with a network of logging roads that have a long history of recreational use but are plagued by erosion issues. Stowe Land Trust wasted no time hiring a trail consultant to help develop a sustainable trail design that would solve the erosion issues and add mileage to the trail system. We have created loops, incorporated more of the hillside and expanded access to include more uses like mountain biking. With so many natural and cultural features on this property, the greatest challenge to designing the trail system was figuring out how to incorporate each of the relics that make this a fun property to explore.



Trail and parking area construction will begin at Kirchner Woods this spring.

During two volunteer workdays held late last fall, the trail corridors were cleared as was the proposed parking lot location. Bids for construction of the parking area have been received and construction will begin once a contractor has been selected. Work on the trails will resume this month with more trail clearing, bridge construction and development of other trail elements.

If you are interested in learning more about trail building or would like to lend a hand, Stowe Land Trust will be holding workdays on **Saturday, May 22nd** and **Saturday, June 26th** starting at 9am. The official opening of the trails will be heralded by the installation of the Kirchner Woods trailhead sign during the June 26th workday.



Areas where trail work will take place at Wiessner Woods are circled on the above map.

**Are you a fan?**

Stowe Land Trust has over 140 fans on Facebook.



# stowe land jam with the Sugardaddies

**M**arch 26th at the Matterhorn was more than just a great party, it was also a fundraiser for Stowe Land Trust. And by all accounts it was a tremendous success - we had a great time and succeeded in raising more than \$4,000.

The important and creative ways in which the community shows their support for land conservation is incredible. The success of the Land Jam would not have been possible without the participation of dozens of individuals and businesses.

*Please show your appreciation for our supporter's generosity by giving them your business.*



Louise Shaffer singing "Me and Bobby McGee" to a rapt audience. Photo courtesy of the Sugardaddies.

## Stowe Land Jam Supporters

The Matterhorn  
The Sugardaddies  
(Barry Lyden, Chris Tagatac, John Spencer, Eric Gershman & Trevor Crist)  
Guest Musicians  
(Nifer Knight, Mike Colbourn, Louise Shaffer & Mike Snyder)  
Trisha Fong  
Umiak Outfitters  
Green Mountain Inn  
Mammut  
Outdoor Research  
Bill Levins  
Scarlett Strands  
Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm  
Trina Hosmer  
Fin & Feathers  
West Branch Yoga  
Trapp Family Lodge  
Hen of the Wood  
Oxygen  
Rossignol  
Darn Tough VT  
Isis for Women  
Stowe Kitchen Bath & Linens  
In Company  
Iride  
Level  
Petra Cliffs  
Hair Creations, Etc.

## Cushman Design Group Hired to Assist with Mill Trail Cabin Restoration



**S**ince acquiring the Mill Trail property in 2003, Stowe Land Trust has been working to restore the cabins to a condition allowing the public to safely visit. Scarcely touched since they were built 80 years ago, SLT's goal is to use the cabins to tell the story of Stowe's land-use and cultural history.

The original cedar shake roof on the Moravian built cabin was replaced in 2008 thanks to donated labor from Steel Construction and Patterson & Smith Construction. In addition to the roof replacement, SLT made significant drainage improvements to protect the structural integrity of the cabin's foundation.

With the highest priority repairs behind us, Stowe Land Trust is now ready to begin looking at ways to increase the cabin's availability to the public. Architects from the Cushman Design Group will develop "as-built" drawings of the cabin to properly document the interior while assessing Stowe Land Trust's options for offering day-use and potentially overnight-use to the public. Mary Jo Lewellyn, an historic preservation consultant, has signed onto the project as well and will be integral to making sure options for restoration will not compromise the cabin's historic integrity.

If you are interested in learning more about the restoration project or are just curious about the cabins, feel free to call or stop by our office at 699 South Main Street in the lower village.

## Spring is Mud Season!

During spring mud season, trails are particularly vulnerable to erosion because of excessively wet conditions. Hikers are asked to stay off high elevation trails until Memorial Day. Several conserved properties around Stowe are good places to stretch your legs this spring. The trail at Pinnacle Meadow is a great walk with an amazing view of town. Try out the recently built Alex's Trail on the SLT owned DuMont property in Moscow. The trail was built by the Stowe Mountain Bike Club and dedicated to an avid local rider.



# We Have Hats!

Call or stop by our office at 699 South Main Street to pick out a new lid.  
\$18 for members • \$20 for non-members

www.stowelandtrust.org

VISIT STOWE LAND TRUST ONLINE FOR PROJECT UPDATES, AN EVENTS CALENDAR, OR TO MAKE A DONATION

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