

Mountain Views

Quarterly Newsletter of Stowe Land Trust

Winter 2011



You Helped Bridge the Gap!

Conserving the Adams Camp property was the most ambitious conservation project Stowe Land Trust has undertaken in the twenty four years since its inception. The conservation of this 513-acre parcel, at a cost of \$1,680,000, has proven to be a tremendous asset not only to those who live in Stowe, but to those who come to Stowe for the variety of recreational opportunities it offers.

Permanent land protection continues to be a major factor in Stowe's tourism based-economy, and the Adams Camp land is one of the notable centerpieces of the investment the community has made in our recreational resources. The Adams Camp property embodies much of what land conservation seeks to accomplish by providing valuable wildlife habitat, contributing to the forest products industry, and serving as an active contributor to the present and future recreational economy of the area.

Once the hub of downhill skiing in the 1930's, this area continues to play an important role in Stowe's recreational identity. Over the last few years the Adams Camp property has been the focus of efforts to develop a network of mountain bike trails launching the vision of the Vermont Ride Center (see Mtn Views, Fall 2009).

During this same period, SLT recognized the removal of the old wooden logging bridge across Ranch Brook as a significant public access concern. The bridge, located only a half mile from Route 108, had provided easy access to the bulk of the Adams Camp land.

With overwhelming support from you and the strong partnerships with Trapp Family Lodge, the Town of Stowe, Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe Mtn Bike Club and the Stowe Nordic Outing Club we were able to raise the funds necessary to replace the Adams Camp Bridge. Today, because of your support and the incredible collaboration among a wide range of user groups, the Adams Camp land is easily accessible to hikers, hunters, mtn bikers, skiers and snowshoers.

Reflecting on the community's achievement, Executive Director Heather Furman noted, "this bridge is an enduring symbol of what can be accomplished with strong partnerships. Working together, we've made this conserved land available to the public for generations to come."



"Progress does not have to be patented to be worthwhile. Progress can also be measured by our interactions with nature and its preservation. Can we teach children to look at a flower and see all the things it represents: beauty, the health of an ecosystem, and the potential for healing?"
— Richard Louv

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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.

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



Dear Friend:

I am excited and humbled as the incoming Chair of the Stowe Land Trust for the next two years. I am humbled by the accomplishments and high standards of those who have preceded me, and excited about the future of this organization.

We are fortunate to have a very dedicated staff including Executive Director Heather Furman, Assistant Director Becca Washburn, and Office Manager Erin Bruhns. They have a heavy workload but are always willing to help in any way they can.

Equally important to the well-being of the organization is our Board of Directors. This dedicated group of community members is responsible for governing the organization and maintaining the public trust. Not only does the Board meet

As Stowe Land Trust's leadership is turned over to a new Chair, SLT would like to recognize and thank Lainie Nichols for the significant contributions she made which have benefited the organization during the two years she spent as Chair.

Under Lainie's tenure and leadership, SLT weathered the changes of a growing organization, and she stood at the helm as we added key properties to our conservation portfolio and undertook dozens of stewardship projects.

As an attorney, Lainie has donated countless hours of legal services to our organization and is exceedingly generous with her time, always making herself available for meetings and volunteering at every event and workday.

Thank you Lainie for your leadership these past two years.

A Message from SLT's New Board Chair

monthly, but many serve on various committees and volunteer at events.

In early January the Board and staff will participate in a Future Directions Planning Workshop facilitated by Marc Smiley, a well-known land trust consultant. We expect to hear about national trends in land conservation and how SLT can benefit from the experience of others. Another purpose of this workshop will be to discuss critical issues facing land conservation in Stowe and set priorities for the next several years. We will also strategize how the Board and staff can continue to work most effectively to tackle issues related to fundraising and carrying out the goals of our Strategic Plan.

The last two years have been challenging for many non-profit organizations, but thankfully we have been able to continue our work of protecting and conserving land for our community. The completion of the Adams Camp Bridge is just one example of the outpouring of support SLT enjoys. We are indeed grateful for your continued support.

If you have any ideas or thoughts to convey, please know that I welcome your comments.

Thanks,

Cliff Johnson, Chair

A Special Thanks to Outgoing Chair, Lainie Nichols



Lainie enjoys a well deserved lunch after a morning of trail work on the Mill Trail to Bingham Falls.

Enhanced Easement Incentive Renewed!

Congress just renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The incentive, which had expired at the end of 2009, helped Stowe Land Trust work with willing landowners in our community to conserve productive agricultural and forest lands and natural areas.

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural or historic resources on their land. When landowners donate a conservation easement to Stowe Land Trust they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while relinquishing future development rights.

The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner's federal income tax. It:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;

- Allows farmers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

“Our whole community wins when thoughtful landowners conserve their land this way, protecting wildlife habitat, clean drinking water, scenic landscapes, recreational spaces, and productive agricultural lands,” said Heather Furman, Executive Director of Stowe Land Trust. “Conservation agreements have become an important tool nationally for protecting our watersheds, farms and forests, increasing the pace of private land conservation by a third – to over a million acres a year. Stowe Land Trust joins America’s 1,700 land trusts and their two million supporters in thanking Congress for making this important conservation tool available,” she said.

In Stowe, the incentive has had a real impact. Gert Lepine and her three sisters grew up exploring the forest and fishing streams in the Sterling Valley near their family’s Mud City dairy farm. This time spent outdoors forged



a life-long connection with the land that led them to donate a conservation easement protecting some of the places they considered special.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization that provides a voice for land trusts in Washington, DC, bills to make this incentive permanent have 274 House and 41 Senate co-sponsors from all 50 states, including majorities of Democrats and Republicans in the House. This legislation is supported by more than 60 national agricultural, sportsmen’s, and conservation organizations.

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit: www.stowelandtrust.org.

A “First Timer’s” Take on Rally 2010, the National Conference on Land Conservation

I was what they call a “first timer” at Rally this year – complete with my forest green badge to let everyone know. I received a lot of knowing looks and a few comments and at first I was self conscious, but as the days wore on I began to notice that I wasn’t alone.

I was amazed to see so many people just like me – young, wide-eyed and a little lost at times. We gravitated toward one another because we had a few things in common, we are the next generation of conservationists and we graduated from college in the same decade.

Accreditation was a large part of why I was able to go to Rally this year. Stowe Land Trust officially accepted its accredited status in March and since I had played a role in putting the application together the Board felt it was only right that all three of the staff attend Rally and participate in the ceremony.

As it turned out though, Accreditation was only a small part of the schedule and only one theme that coursed through Rally. There



were discussions and speeches about how conservation is linked to human health, diversity, and climate change. We were urged, as organizations and individuals, to think strategically and work together to protect the landscape.

For me, Rally officially began early Saturday morning with a field trip and went non-stop until Tuesday afternoon, when I decided to take a break to reflect and write this. It might be an understatement when I say that my head feels like it’s about to burst. You can tell that Rally has evolved over the years (out of necessity) to pack as much information as possible into a relatively short amount of time. Even during the unstructured slots of time everyone has an agenda – find the nearest restroom or coffee post, connect with a distant colleague or familiar co-worker to discuss what you just learned or book it to the next seminar so you actually get a seat this time.

My favorite part about Rally was having the opportunity to engage with other like-minded people. Their excitement and passion has been contagious and while I can’t truthfully say it re-ignited my own passion for land conservation – because that flame never went out – it has reinvigorated me and perhaps started a new fire or two.

- Erin Bruhns, Office Manager



The first snowflakes of the season bring everyone out to play. But as winter wears on and snow becomes something to shovel from the walk, it gets easier and easier to stay inside.

With children spending less time outside in and out of school, they are experiencing “nature deficit disorder”. This phrase was coined by Richard Louv author of best-selling book “The Last Child in the Woods” who finds that children are missing out on the wellness benefits derived from spending time outdoors.

Winter doesn't have to be a hiatus from your family's commitment to getting outside and staying connected to nature. As long as you bundle up and have cocoa ready at home, winter is a great time to be outside. Here are some ways to keep winter outdoor play fresh and fun.

Look for tracks. A light snowfall can reveal what animals are around looking for food. Kids aren't the only ones leaving footprints in the winter woods. Many animals are out and about in the cold and snow. Each one leaves behind its own set of tracks.

Build a miniature luge track. Have the kids use metal spoons to carve parallel tracks in the snow. (Snow that has been piled up and frozen hard is best.) They can race the spoons, rubber balls, acorns, or anything else handy. Kids will have fun trying to create the fastest course!

Make mini-snowmen out of snowballs. Younger children find making these little people easier than building the standard life-sized snowman. And older kids can spend more time on the details instead of building huge snow creatures. Get the neighborhood involved and create a whole city of mini-snowpeople!

Make ice sculptures. Fill a clear plastic container with a few inches of water. Add food coloring and stones and sticks for decoration. Set outside for several hours or overnight to freeze. Add another layer of water and nature “stuff” dyed a different color and allow to freeze. Repeat to create multiple layers.

Have a scavenger hunt. Prepare a list of specific items children can find outside in a park or your backyard. Acorns, maple leaves, pine cones and pebbles are all great ideas. Challenge them to find all of the items on the list in a certain amount of time. This is a fun activity for groups small and large.

Zoom in on nature. Bring a magnifying glass outside to take a close-up look at the frozen foliage. Or, if you have a microscope, take some items inside (quickly, before they melt!) to investigate further.

Land conservation isn't just about protecting farm land or forests for wildlife - it's also about having places to take a walk, explore nature or sit on a log with a thermos of cocoa. By conserving land in our community and offering family friendly outings and activities we hope to prevent a disconnection between children and nature. Wiessner Woods, Kirchner Woods and Maple Run are just a few examples of lands conserved by Stowe Land Trust to make sure you, your children and your grandchildren have

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25 fun activities for children to do outside in winter.

1. Make a snow angel.
2. Build a snow fort.
3. Build a snowman.
4. Take a walk and look for animal tracks.
5. Play chase, tag, or hide and seek.
6. Play tug-o-war.
7. Do crayon rubbings of tree bark.
8. Go sledding.
9. Shovel a path in the yard like a maze.
10. Have a snowball battle.
11. Drink hot chocolate outside.
12. Put out birdseed for birds.
13. Take a nature hike.
14. Bird watch.
15. Scavenger hunt for winter nature stuff.
16. Collect pinecones for decorations.
17. Lick an icicle.
18. Make a list of the trees along the trail.
19. Lay on your back and watch clouds.
20. Go for a snowshoe.
21. Look for animals out & about like you.
22. Look for poetry or story ideas.
23. Hunt for bird nests.
24. Take photos of trees.
25. Ice skate.

See you on the trails!



As we ring in the new year, Stowe Land Trust is preparing for another busy and fulfilling year - nurturing relationships with landowners considering land conservation, holding informative outings, maintaining high quality trails, and engaging our youth in the sense of volunteerism that's so strong in our community. Pinnacle Society members form the foundation of our operating fund leveraging critical dollars and support needed to accomplish these goals.

Stowe Land Trust is continuing to show its appreciation for the support of Pinnacle Society members by holding a number of fun and informative events this year.

On **Sunday, February 20th**, Nationally recognized naturalist and habitat specialist with thirty years of experience, Sue Morse of Keeping Track will host a snowshoe outing that will be truly inspiring! Sue will lead the group along well-traveled animal corridors using their tracks to identify the creatures that thrive in our forests and fields.



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In July, wild food enthusiast Russ Cohen, will lead a foraging trek to discover the unlikely of edible botany. Additional details will be available soon.

Stowe Land Trust wishes to recognize and thank the following 2011 Pinnacle Society members.

- Friend of Stowe Land Trust (1)
- Nancy and Bill Anderson
- Phil Branton and Ellen Lazarus
- Rick and Ann Bresnahan
- Donna and Jake Carpenter
- Kitty and Allan Coppock
- Denise Burt Cushwa
- Manuel and Marianne del Valle
- Peter and Deborah Dodson
- Peter and Bari Dreissigacker
- Trowbridge and Claudia Elliman
- Tom and Mary Evslin

- Linda Sallop and Michael Fenlon
- Mark and Liza Ferguson
- Robert and Jana Giordano
- Gerry and Terry Griffin
- Diane and Andreas Halvorsen
- Cliff Johnson
- Frank and Marion Kellogg
- Bonnie Knight
- George Lengvari
- Lefty and Joyce Nichols Lewis
- Bunny and Peter Merrill
- John and Millie Merrill
- Melissa and David Norton
- Dan and Cookie Owen
- John and Adrienne Peacock
- Michael and Deborah Pucillo
- James and Ruth Santos
- Nicholas A. Skinner
- Oliver and Gay Slesar
- Lee and Alice Spencer
- Timothy and Nancy Taussig
- Union Bank
- Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli
- Richard and Sally Watts
- Roger M. and Jill J. Witten
- Norris and Judy Wolff

We are grateful for your support!

Pinnacle Society members joining after December 30th will be recognized in the spring issue of Mountain Views.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Success in Vermont

Since it was first authorized in 1964, LWCF has been the federal mainstay for purchasing threatened lands and waters, and providing public access and recreational opportunities in America's national, state, and community parks and forests, wildlife refuges and other public resource areas. Funded by a portion of the fees paid into the Treasury each year by oil and gas companies drilling in federal coastal waters, this program does not rely on tax dollars. Instead, LWCF simply reinvests proceeds from the sale of one federal asset into the purchase of another for the benefit of all Americans.



LWCF in Stowe, Morristown & Waterbury

LWCF has helped protect some of Vermont's most treasured places. Vermont has received approximately \$103 million over the past four decades. Locally LWCF has invested nearly \$1 million dollars in resources like the Stowe Rec Path, Morristown Community Playground, and Hope Davey Park in Waterbury. In addition, millions of dollars have been invested in the protection of public lands like Mt. Mansfield, Camels Hump and Putnam State Forests.

Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of the Vermont economy. The Outdoor Industry Association has found that active outdoor recreation supports 35,000 jobs across Vermont, generates \$187 million in annual state tax revenue and produces \$2.5 billion annually in retail sales and services across Vermont - accounting for nearly 12 percent of gross state product. Further, the U.S. Census reports that each year over 545,000 people enjoy hunting, fishing, and watching wildlife across Vermont, contributing

\$383 million in wildlife recreation spending to the state economy.

Recent Action

America's Great Outdoors Act of 2010 was recently introduced by members of Congress to extend this vital program which would otherwise expire in 2015. As the last days of 2010 approach, reauthorization remains in play, and LWCF's many supporters in Capitol Hill and across the country will be working to secure the program's future before the last gavel falls in the 11th Congress. We will keep you updated on the results of these efforts.



Annie Dwight

A native of Stowe, Annie has a special connection to many SLT lands. Annie has a BS (Magna Cum Laude) in Environmental Studies from UVM and a JD from the NYU School of Law. She is currently an Associate Attorney at Walsh & Monaghan, LLP, concentrating on environmental and land use law and real estate transactions. In her free time, Annie enjoys snowboarding, surfing, hiking, and adventure traveling. Before attending law school, Annie was Programs Coordinator at SLT from 2002-2005. We are thrilled to have Annie serving on the Board and look forward to her new role contributing to the success of SLT.



Mike Haynes

Born and raised in South Burlington, Vermont. Mike travelled the country as a successful businessman before settling in Stowe with his wife Patty. Enjoying their retirement, they started a small Alpaca farm and sugaring operation to keep them busy when they are not cross country skiing, biking, hiking or travelling to New York to visit their two children. After getting settled in Stowe, it wasn't long before they became a familiar face

at SLT events. Mike's enthusiasm for the outdoors and his business ownership experience will be a tremendous asset to SLT.



Brian Mullin

Brian and his wife Jill have lived in Stowe with their family of four children - Seamus, Catherine, Tyler and Christopher for nearly 10 years. Brian graduated from UVM in 2002 and until 2007, he worked in finance in Boston and is currently running a clean energy business. He and his family make good use of the recreational resources in the area by skiing, hiking and trail running while still making time to travel to new places. As a SLT Board member, we are looking forward to his contributions as an active and engaged member of the community.



Nancy Krakower

Nancy, her husband and two daughters have lived in Stowe for 14 years. While she claims that most of her energy was spent raising her two amazing daughters she still manages to carry out an ambitious volunteer schedule. Volunteering in the elementary school when her children were young and serving as the President of the Jewish Com-

munity of Greater Stowe from 2003-2005 and during 10 years on the Board. Currently, in addition to SLT, she is also active with the TRIP Dance Company and the Clarina Howard Nichols Center. Recently she has taken on a new challenge working for a company called BeePosh, which is a manufacturer of "tween lifestyle products". It goes without saying that Nancy is a committed and energetic member of the community and we are delighted she has joined the SLT Board.



Bunny Merrill

Bunny and her husband Peter live in a beautiful farmhouse on Elmore Mtn Road with their two sons, four dogs, two cats and a pasture of goats. The goats are business partners in the Elmore Mountain Farm where Bunny and Peter run a business making natural body care products from goats milk. Bunny and her family enjoy snowshoeing in the woods around their home. In addition to her experience as farmer and business owner, she brings her passion for farmland conservation to SLT. Her family farm in Starfford, Vermont is in the process of being conserved with the Upper Valley Land Trust.

SLT Bids Farewell to Several Outstanding Board Members

Stowe Land Trust has been fortunate to have had **Elizabeth Squier, Andrew Woods, Ashley Sargent** and **Keith Thompson**, as members of our Board of Directors for the past several years. Andrew served diligently as our Treasurer, Elizabeth brought her perspective on farming and local food, Ashley brought creativity and energy to our events, and Keith, a private practice forester was a valuable resource on forestry and land use practices.

ship drives and a proud and tenacious campaigner for the Pinnacle Society. Like clockwork, Gerry will call the office first thing Monday morning with his updates and ideas; he's always the first person to show up at meetings and perhaps most importantly, Gerry is always willing to make those personal connections with others who care about conservation in Stowe.

We would also like to offer a very special thank you to one of our longest serving board members who is retiring from the Board this year. **Gerry Griffin** joined the Board in 1996 and for the past 14 years, he has been a tireless advocate for making Stowe Land Trust a prominent, visible organization that is part of the fabric of the Stowe community. Gerry has been the brains behind dozens of our fundraising events, a bottomless well of ideas for our member-

Thank you, retiring Board Members, for your energy, commitment and guidance over the years.



Storm Damage to Forests: Information and Resources for Landowners



Wind gusts up to 90 miles per hour roared through Lamoille County as November gave way to December. Many of us awoke to scenes that could have come from a New England style Wizard of Oz. Trees had blown down, power was out and any lingering lawn furniture could be found in the neighbor's yard.

Of the five properties owned by Stowe Land Trust, Kirchner Woods was the only one to suffer damage from the windstorm. It wasn't long before people began contacting the office to let us know that there were several trees down. It turns out there were hundreds of windthrown trees in the neighborhood of Kirchner Woods.

Our first response and highest priority was to make sure that trails were clear and safe for visitors. However, this event led us to ponder how other landowners were able to respond to the damage. Did they know who to call, how to hire someone to clean up, and how to minimize the risk of damage in the future?



We contacted Ray Toolan, Lamoille and Orleans County Forester, to ask him a few questions about how landowners can be more prepared for an event like this in the future.

SLT:What do County Foresters do?

RT: My primary function is to assist forest landowners in making informed decisions about their forest lands. I also administer the Use Value Appraisal Program for Lamoille and Orleans County. I am available for site visits on request to diagnose insect and disease problems and similar issues.

SLT:What site conditions cause trees to tip in strong winds?

RT: As you can probably surmise, trees are held in place by their roots. If the roots have good deep soil to anchor in then the tree will be more resistant to wind-throw. Thin soils, wet soils and the "lack of company" all contribute to making a tree more susceptible to wind-throw. By lack of company I am referring to what happens when a thinning or harvesting occurs that leave remaining trees overly exposed on sites with thin and/or wet soils.

SLT:Are there actions landowners can take to minimize the risk of damage during a windstorm?

Ray: Understand the characteristics of your forest. How the woods are thinned and/or harvested may play a large part. Areas that are prone to windthrow will often exhibit evidence of previous events. "Pits and mounds" are featured that indicate windthrow in the past.

Do landowners know who to call, how to hire someone to clean up, and how to minimize the risk of damage in the future?

SLT: What is the first thing someone should do if they discover damage to a single tree or to their woodlot?

RT: That depends in large part as to what the damage is. If it is just a few trees, the damage caused by trying to salvage them might exceed the value of the trees salvaged. If the damage is extensive, a planned salvage cut should be considered with a lot of thought going into how to keep the trees still standing to remain in an upright position.

SLT: Should landowners have all downed or damaged trees removed?

RT: Downed trees provide habitat for a variety of animals and also return nutrients to the soil as they break down, so leaving them causes no harm. If they are obstructing roads or trails but are not enough to warrant salvage, then simply cutting them out of the roads and trails would be adequate.

SLT: Is professional assistance available to help with damage assessments and other steps necessary to respond to damage from a windstorm?

RT: Yes. The county forester is available to visit the land and offer recommendations. We are not normally allowed to conduct timber sales however. There are a number of very competent consulting foresters that can be used to oversee a proper salvage operation if it is called for. If the land is in the Use Value Appraisal program an amendment to the plan will need to be filed.

SLT: Is there any financial assistance available to landowners with wind storm damage to their woodlot?

RT: At this time, the only cost-share program I am aware of is through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), a part of the US Department of Agriculture. There is money available to help clean up damaged sugar bushes as sugaring is considered an agricultural use.

SLT: What, if anything, should landowners do once the damage is cleaned up?

RT: This question assumes the damage will be cleaned up which may not always be the best solution. Any time a stand is opened up, creating more room around trees, there is an increased risk of windthrow. There is little that can be done other than to monitor your woods as the remaining trees adjust.

Contact County Forester, Ray Toolan for more information or questions about how to manage your forest land.

Raymond J Toolan, County Forester
Lamoille & Orleans Counties
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raymond.toolan@state.vt.us

Become a member today!

Whatever conservation means to you,
your support of Stowe Land Trust will enhance our community through conservation.



Join online or send in the enclosed remittance envelope. Thank you!

www.stowelandtrust.org

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