

Mountain Views

Quarterly Newsletter of Stowe Land Trust

Summer 2013



Mill Trail Gets a New Lease on Life!

Stowe Land Trust is celebrating the 10th anniversary of conserving Mill Trail with a major initiative to stabilize and restore the historic Moravian Cabin located on the property.

Since taking ownership of Mill Trail, our goal has been to keep the Cabin's remarkable story alive. To best preserve the building and its history, we're committed to enhancing public use and enjoyment of the Cabin and its surroundings for the benefit of visitors and residents of the Stowe area.

Restoration of the Cabin will reinvigorate its original purpose of connecting people with the outdoors through access to recreation. With recreation continuing to play a major role in the economy and quality of life in Stowe, restoration of the Cabin will allow access to the outdoors in much the same way it did in the 1930's. While no longer the focus of downhill skiing in Stowe, Ranch Valley still offers access to an extensive network of Nordic skiing, hiking and biking trails.

SLT is working with Little Tree Builders and Salvus Construction to restore various parts of the Cabin which will ensure its longevity and allow us to safely open it to the public. They will also be addressing ongoing drainage issues which are threatening the Cabin's integrity.



In addition to contributions from individuals, SLT was awarded a grant to complete this restoration work from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. A requirement of receiving the funds was to sign a Historic Preservation Easement - a legal document that serves to permanently protect the Cabin's significant historic features. This means that current and future renovations must be done in such a way as to retain the original character and craftsmanship of the Cabin when it was constructed in the 1930's.

Restoration work is on schedule to be complete by November, 2013 allowing us to open the Cabin to the public next spring. SLT will make the Cabin available for day use activities like family celebrations, work retreats, and outdoor classroom programs. In addition to day use, we are interested in having the Cabin available for rustic overnight rental. Visitors staying at the Mill Trail Cabin will enjoy an experience similar to that offered by the popular Stone Hut on the summit of Mt. Mansfield.

In the meantime, SLT has hired a Summer Naturalist that will be organizing activities for kids, offering interpretive walks explaining the rich history of the area and leading tours of the property. Check www.stowelandtrust.org for progress on the restoration and a schedule of programs and activities at the property this summer. Find out more about SLT's Summer Naturalist 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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From the Executive Director



There is nothing quite as special as seeing a child's face light up with an unexpected discovery in nature. Whether it's the first time you held a frog, uncovered potatoes in the garden, or swung from a tree branch into a pond, seeing a child experiencing these simple pleasures give us all a sense of well-being.

This season SLT is excited to bring a Summer Naturalist program to our community. We want to provide opportunities for you and your family to create memories of your own – right here in Stowe's spectacular landscape.

In the coming weeks, you'll be hearing more from us about new outdoor education programs, trail workdays, and nature walks at our Mill Trail property on Notchbrook Road, and on many of our other conserved lands this summer.

Thanks to you, our new Naturalist, Sarah Soderbergh (see page 3) will be able to share her passion for the natural world with the next generation, and ensure that our children love the land as much as we do!

While I still enjoy holding frogs and digging for potatoes, my favorite way to experience na-

ture is trail running. On a recent run in Stowe's Brownsville area, I was halted in my tracks by the arresting mechanical call of one of our most special summer residents – the Bobolink! Children delight in the Bobolink's robotic "R2-D2" call, and their distinctive plumage makes them enjoyable to watch floating above our hayfields.

Spring is a perilous time for these migrants who nest in many of Stowe's meadows. Local conservationist Michael Sweatman is working to raise awareness about the habitat needs of the Bobolink and what we can do to support their survival (see page 7).

At Stowe Land Trust, we know how much you love the outdoors. Your support has allowed us to make some much needed improvements at Wiessner Woods by partnering with the VT Youth Conservation Corps and the Catamount Trail Association. This summer, look for improved trails and bridges, new signs and updates to the trail map. We hope that these improvements will make your next walk in the Woods more safe and enjoyable. Enjoy these summer days!



Heather Furman

Turning Pizza into Dough

For the fifth straight year, Pie in the Sky's Benefit Bake proved to be a success story for the Stowe community. Friends of Stowe Land Trust showed up in remarkable numbers to eat pizza in their show of support for land conservation!



Stowe Land Trust is truly fortunate to be able to partner with Skip and Susan Verchot, owners of Pie in the Sky. When asked why they choose to support Stowe Land Trust they speak of their connection to the community and the natural landscape.

"Memories are part of the human landscape. If you were lucky enough to have a natural landscape as your playground growing up, you'll understand why preservation is so important. Land is a big part of Vermont's culture - our farms, woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife all make up the fabric of who we are. We want the future to hold our past. This is our small way of giving back for all that the land has meant to us."

By generously donating 100% of the entire day's pizza sales, this event raised over \$1,700 for Stowe Land Trust! Skip and Susan deserve a huge thank you, along with their hard working kitchen, wait and hosting staff. We are tremendously grateful to all of you - from families and individuals, Pie in the Sky regulars and groups of co-workers dining out that day – you all contributed to a successful day for land conservation.

Discover Nature This Summer with SLT's Naturalist

Bowie and Helen Duncan, neighbors and regular visitors to Mill Trail feel a strong connection to the property because of its rich history. Many visitors to conserved land miss the engaging stories that places like Mill Trail reveal about the historic interaction between people and the land.

The Duncans wanted others to be able to experience the wonder of nature and the history of the property, so they contacted SLT to see what it would take to hire a Naturalist for the summer. It turns out, expanding outreach and naturalist programming on our conserved lands, particularly Mill Trail, has been a growing priority for SLT. With generous financial support from the Duncans and a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, SLT was able to hire a Summer Naturalist for the first time.

"By hiring a Summer Naturalist, SLT will be able to offer the community a much richer

experience on conserved lands," explained Executive Director, Heather Furman. "SLT is very fortunate to have friends like Bowie and Helen that value conserved land and recognize the long-term benefits of connecting people with nature."

From knee-high naturalists to curious adults, SLT's summer outreach program will have something for everyone. Sarah Soderbergh, a recent UVM graduate and an even more recent Stowe resident has been hired to develop and implement a comprehensive outreach program for SLT. She comes to us with extensive academic experience in environmental education and work experience with internships where she taught watershed education to a wide range of age groups.

We are excited to have her join the SLT crew and are proud to be cultivating the next generation of conservation leaders. Stay tuned to www.stowelandtrust.org or Facebook for a

calendar of fun and educational activities for everyone.



SLT's new Summer Naturalist, Sarah Soderbergh.



WHAT'S GOING ON?

For more information or directions to any of these outings, check the News and Events page on our website: www.stowelandtrust.org, or feel free to call 802.253.7221 or email info@stowelandtrust.org.

14th Annual Golf Tournament

Thursday, August 1, 2013
West Hill Golf Course 11:00 am Registration
Register to play this private 9 hole course in a scramble format tournament. Lot's of fun and great prizes! See page 4 for details.

2nd Annual Summer Cocktail Party

Thursday, August 1, 2013
West Hill Golf Course Club House
5:30 - 7:00 pm
Join golfers and friends of Stowe Land Trust at the Club House for a fun and relaxing evening with drinks and hors d'oeuvres at the beautiful West Hill Golf Course. See page 4 for details.

Morristown Bog Walk

Saturday, August 17, 2013
Conserved Valour Property 9am - Noon
Learn about the unique natural communities that make up a bog environment on the conserved Valcour property. Be sure to bring sturdy footwear.

Pinnacle Society Mushroom Hunt & ID

Saturday, August 31, 2013
SAVE THE DATE - See page 6 for details.

Lepine Woods Walk

Saturday, September 21, 2013
Conserved Lepine Property 9 am - Noon
Learn tree identification skills and other techniques for reading the landscape on the conserved Lepine property in Sterling Valley.

Stowe Pinnacle Hike

Saturday, July 20, 2013
Pinnacle Meadow Parking Area 9 - Noon
The striking views and refreshing breeze on top of Stowe Pinnacle make this a great summer hike. Round trip distance is 2 miles. Be sure to bring water, a snack and sturdy footwear.

Calcutta Social

Wednesday, July 31, 2013
Commodores Inn 6:00 - 7:30 pm
You have a chance to win BIG by betting on your favorite team! See page 4 for details.

Save the Date

Stowe Land Trust's
26th Annual Meeting
Sunday, October 6th
Noon - 4:00 pm

Join SLT for a BBQ celebration of land conservation in Sterling Valley with guest speaker, Michael Snyder, Commissioner of Vermont's Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

Details to follow in an invitation.

14th Annual Golf Tournament Summer Cocktail Party and Calcutta Social

Stowe Land Trust's Annual Invitational Golf Tournament is not only our most successful fundraiser, it is the most fun!

Festivities begin at the Commodores Inn the night before the tournament. Guests and golfers will 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. Past year's winnings have amounted to over \$4,000! Last year's Hen of the Wood gift certificate door prize is back this year. You must be present to win.

The Calcutta Social is \$25 per person for those not registered to play in the tournament. Attendance at the summer cocktail party following the tournament is included in this fee.

During the **Golf Tournament**, the course will be played in an 18 hole scramble format, with four person teams selected by the SLT Golf Committee. The entry fee is \$195 per golfer. For those of you who haven't participated in SLT's golf tournament, this is your opportunity to play the private West Hill Golf Course - a stunning 9 hole course with sweeping views of the Stowe valley.



Wednesday, July 31, 2013
Calcutta Social 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Commodores Inn

Thursday, August 1, 2013
West Hill Golf Course
Tournament Registration 11 am
Shotgun Start at Noon

2nd Annual Summer Cocktail Party
West Hill Golf Course Club House
5:30 - 7:30 pm

Join SLT at the **Annual Summer Cocktail Party** following the tournament for an awards ceremony and raffle drawing where you have a chance to win prizes from a number of local businesses and restaurants. The cocktail party is only \$25 per person if you are not registered to play in the tournament.

This event helps support Stowe Land Trust's mission to conserve our community's natural beauty. We look forward to seeing you on the links!

Space in the tournament fills up fast. Call or send in your registration today!

For more information contact Stowe Land Trust at 802.253.7221 or, becca@stowelandtrust.org.



Cady Hill Forest Brings Award Home to Stowe

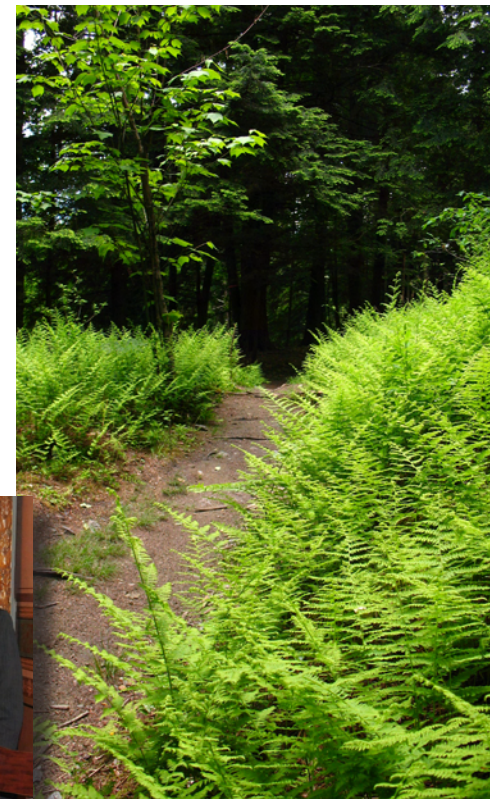
Stowe Land Trust and the Town of Stowe were presented with a Vermont Public Space Honor Award for the Cady Hill Forest conservation project.

"Our collaboration with the Town, VHCB and a range of community partners and businesses is what made the conservation of Cady Hill Forest possible," said Heather Furman, Executive Director of SLT at the ceremony. "We are honored to receive this award on behalf of the Stowe community!"

"The Cady Hill Forest project was chosen because the forest offered a fantastic public space to residents and visitors to Stowe," noted one of the jury members. "We like the way the management addresses recreational uses, conservation needs and long term management and funding via the limited logging operations."

None of this would be possible without the support we receive from our community of donors. So, on behalf of the dedicated staff and Board of Directors of Stowe Land Trust, we offer our congratulations to you, our members, for this award.

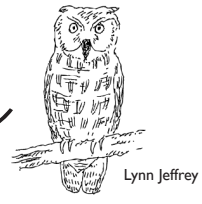
Get the Cady Hill Forest story on our website, www.stowelandtrust.org and join the conversation at [Facebook.com/CadyHillForest](https://www.facebook.com/CadyHillForest).



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Wiessner Woods



Wiessner Woods is a special place for Stowe Land Trust and the community. It was donated to SLT by the Wiessner family in 1992 and has been a well-loved walk in the woods ever since. As a celebration of Wiessner Woods 20th anniversary we have some exciting projects taking place at the property this summer.

SLT partnered with the VT Youth Conservation Corps (YVCC) and the Catamount Trail Association to complete significant trail improvements including a bridge replacement on the Hardwood Ridge Trail (also the route of the Catamount Trail), new puncheon bridges, and a trail re-route on the Sugar House Loop.

A volunteer work day wrapped up YVCC's week of trail work at Wiessner Woods. Volunteers put up new trail markers, spread trail surfacing, raked bridges, replaced bridge decking, and pruned branches along the trail edges. Thanks to all of our friends that came out under threatening skies to spruce up the trails we all love and to Edelweiss for donating our well-deserved lunch!

More than twenty years ago, Muriel Wiessner (known fondly as Moo Moo) deeded the 80 acre forest to Stowe Land Trust. For Moo Moo the signing of the deed was the culmination of a dream shared with her husband Fritz, the renowned alpinist and ardent conservationist who passed away a few years before she donated Wiessner Woods in his memory.

She made the donation to Stowe Land Trust because "it was local" and she "wanted someone who would care for the land they loved". Wiessner Woods was Stowe Land Trust's second conservation project following the facilitation of the acquisition of Mayo Farm by the Town of Stowe. SLT's Board of Directors approached their newly conserved land with thoroughness and care and it has grown to be one of Stowe's most popular conservation areas.

Moo Moo's sentiments about SLT still resonate as we near a quarter century of owning Wiessner Woods. We're still your local land trust and are as committed as ever to caring for the land she and Fritz loved.

In addition to trail improvements this summer, visitors to the property will soon see an updated trail map and new trail signs with the iconic owl that has stood watch over these woods for so long.



Volunteers at the Wiessner Work Day.



YVCC crew leaders in training - taking a break from replacing the Hardwood Ridge Trail bridge.



Squirrel Corn

The Pinnacle Society was created to acknowledge and appreciate the people who help SLT conserve our spectacular natural landscapes for future generations. It recognizes donors of \$1,000 or greater during Stowe Land Trust's membership year (November 1 - October 31).

Pinnacle Society members are the foundation of SLT's commitment to the promise of permanent land protection. Because of the important role the Pinnacle Society plays in the organization, SLT keeps members informed about new conservation projects, important stewardship initiatives and SLT's strategic organizational goals.

Special outings and events are held periodically throughout the year to celebrate the land we have conserved together. Join SLT on Saturday, August 31st, for a mushroom hunting and identification outing with local expert John Atkinson. Look for your invitation with more details in the mail soon. I hope you will join us, and bring a friend or two!

If you are interested in learning more about the Pinnacle Society or becoming a member, contact Executive Director, Heather Furman by emailing heather@stowelandtrust.org or call 802.253.7221.

STOWE
LAND TRUST
*Pinnacle
Society*

Stowe Land Trust wishes to recognize and thank the following 2013 Pinnacle Society members.

Nancy and Bill Anderson
Allan F. Beck
Richard and Nancy Bennum
Charlie and Gibby Berry
Paul and Kathy Bosland
Nancy and David Bradbury
Phil Branton and Ellen Lazarus
Rick and Ann Bresnahan
Julie and Kevin Buchanan
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David Wilkens and Molly Pindell
Roger M. and Jill J. Witten

Pinnacle Society donations received after June 19th will be recognized in the fall issue of Mountain Views.





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Protecting Bobolink Fledglings

By Michael Sweatman

The following article was written by Stowe Land Trust member, Michael Sweatman. The group he represents, Friends of Bobolinks, is looking for volunteers to support their effort to raise awareness of the habitat needs of Bobolinks. Landowners interested in learning more about delayed mowing should also contact Michael Sweatman. This article also appeared in the April 25th issue of the Stowe Reporter.

Over the next few weeks, hundreds — perhaps thousands — of bobolinks, a grassland species that nests in fields, will land in the Stowe valley to seek nesting sites and fledge their young. By the time they arrive, they will have completed a perilous 12,000-mile round-trip journey since their departure to South America last fall.

However, due to more intensive farming practices, which now favor three versus two mowings per season, the vast majority of these fledglings will be destroyed, even before they are able to fly.

Bobolink populations have been reduced by an average of 80 percent over most of their breeding range in North America. Returning migrants need to luck out and “choose” a field that will not be mowed before they have fledged successfully around mid July, or early August if they fail at the first breeding attempt.

Not so long ago, most bobolinks fledged successfully in this fertile valley. But, as the economics of farming in Vermont have become more challenging (price of milk going down; price of feed corn going up), resulting in fewer dairy farms, fewer fields remain and bobolinks are struggling to survive.

But what choice does a farmer have? They need the hay to feed their cattle. Moreover, with the recent sharp increase in corn prices (due to increasing ethanol consumption mandated by the government), more fields are being converted from hay to corn.

In the Champlain Valley — prime bobolink habitat — where most arable land is owned by farmers, there is very little choice. However, in the Stowe valley and several areas in Central Vermont, private landowners control a substantial amount of land where the demand for early mowing may be reduced.

Herein lies an opportunity for bobolinks. “Friends of Bobolinks” wants to work with private landowners and farmers who mow their grass to encourage mowing schedules that will be more bobolink friendly and allow them to breed successfully.

Already, several landowners practice delayed mowing. They do so because they feel strongly about the bobolink’s survival and want to continue to enjoy that irrepressible bubbling song in their hayfields into the summer.

We already have several volunteers. If you are a landowner who already delays mowing or would like to learn more, please contact Michael Sweatman at michaelsweatmam@gmail.com, or 253-8142 (home) or 371-9025 (cell).



Every purchase you make increases awareness of our conservation efforts and raises funds for SLT.

NOW ONLY \$18!

Who doesn't have a bunch of stuff to tote around? This organic cotton tote featuring our 25th anniversary logo is the perfect solution. Natural with black straps. 21" w x 16 1/4" h x 7" d.
Only 7 left!



NOW ONLY \$15!

A must-have for any SLT enthusiast, this 100% cotton twill cap has an adjustable fabric closure with brass buckle and hide-away grommet. Available in Khaki, with 25th anniversary logo.
Only 14 left!



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The perfect companion for any outdoor adventure, this 27 oz. Klean Kanteen with SLT "Conserving land for our community" logo will ensure your thirst is quenched.
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NOW ONLY \$25!

Great for late nights around the campfire or early morning bike rides. SKIDA's Nordic hat will keep you warm but not too hot. Get yours before they're gone! Available in Tropical Fruit pattern with 25th anniversary logo, one size fits most.
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