



conserved!

RICKETSON FARM

By **Barry Matthews**, Community Engagement Manager

Photo by Paul Rogers

On March 23, Ken Ricketson and our partners at the Vermont Land Trust finalized the protection of the 217-acre Ricketson Farm! Thanks to the support of members like you, this iconic Route 100 landmark will be protected forever. In total, more than 400 individual donors contributed to the project, which also received substantial support from the Town of Stowe and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

Stowe Land Trust is committed to conserving land for the benefit of all, and addressing a diversity of needs. While the farm's rich agricultural soil and scenic beauty were at the heart of our campaign, they are just two of several key community values we work to protect.

continued on page 5

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 From the Chair
- 5 Ricketson Farm
- 9 Volunteer Report
- 10 Legacy Giving
- 11 Cady Hill Turns 10
- 12 Event Calendar

A person wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, black shorts, a white helmet, and a backpack is standing on a dirt trail in a forest, leaning on their mountain bike. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees and a mossy ground. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a dappled light effect. The text 'connect to something more' is overlaid on the upper part of the image, enclosed in a white bracket-like frame.

connect
to something
more

Cady Hill Forest Turns 10!
See page 11 for more.

Photo by Matt Bruhns



From the Chair, Dave Wilkens

Another winter is in the books and with it another major milestone. In March, we officially closed the Ricketson Farm project and secured an easement that will ensure its conservation for future generations. Coincidentally, this is the Land Trust’s 35th land protection project in its 35-year history. This project could not have been done without a major assist from our partners, the generosity of the Ricketson family, and the many donors and volunteers who helped. Kudos to everyone who contributed.

In the coming months we will be rolling out a new look and feel. Our brand refresh has been a project 18 months in the making. While the look may be different the vision remains the same. We realize SLT is a conduit for the community to maintain connections—with ourselves, with each other, and with the outdoors. The last two years have only made this more evident. For that reason, **Connect to Something More** will be our call to action as we embark on next 35 years of serving the community.

Looking ahead to this year, we are undertaking our most rigorous strategic planning process in the last decade. The last two years have made it necessary to reflect and evaluate our role in the community as we deal with issues whose impact has accelerated from low simmer to full boil. In addition to evaluating the core aspects of our mission, we will be looking to new areas where SLT may play a role in the coming years. Among those we are giving attention and consideration are education and outreach; affordable and workforce housing; equitable access to land; and ecological health and restoration. If you have any questions or comments, I encourage you to reach out.

Whether you seek your connection to the outdoors via mountain biking, birding, leisurely strolls, or country drives, the passion for open spaces is a common thread that binds our community together. If you haven’t done so already, I encourage you to become a member of SLT, to get involved through volunteer opportunities, or join us on an outing or at an event.

Sincerely,

Dave Wilkens
Chair, Board of Directors

**new look
same vision
ready for the next 35 years!**

Read more about our new brand
on our updated website.

STOWE LAND TRUST

Board of Directors

- David Wilkens, *Chair*
- Samuel P. Gaines, *Vice Chair*
- Amy Stewart, *Treasurer*
- Anna Black, *Secretary*
- Clifford Borden
- Beth Bradford
- Doren Dolan
- Catherine Drake
- Amy Farley
- Frank Foti
- Jesse Goldfine
- Meg Kauffman
- Jess Laporte
- Walt Looney
- Jason McLean
- Darsey Moon
- Ryan Percy
- Kerry Sedutto
- Jason Slocum
- Thomas B. Sweet

Directors Emeriti

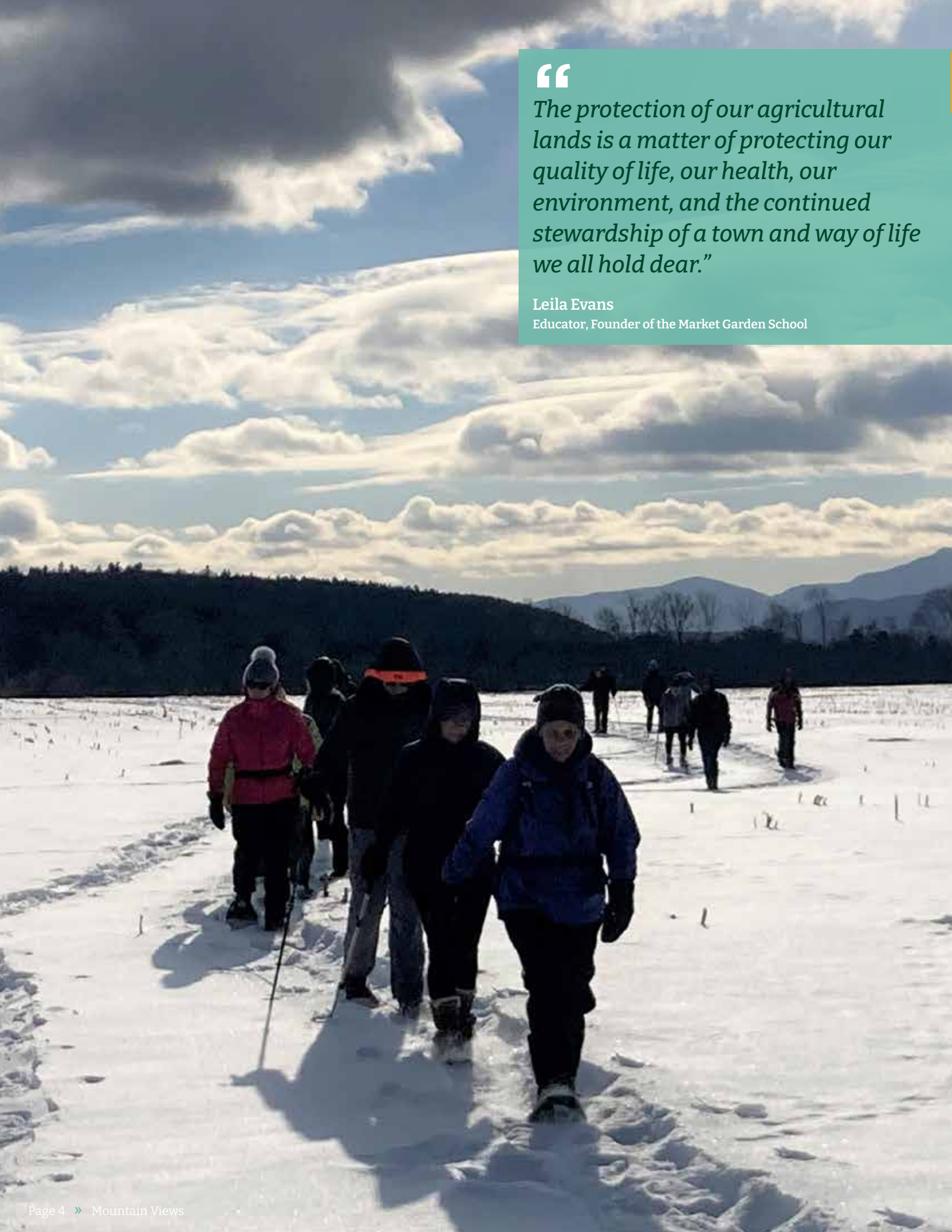
- Charles Berry
- Chess Brownell
- Trowbridge Elliman
- Walter Frame
- John Merrill
- Alan Thorndike
- Roger Witten

Staff

- Kristen Sharpless,
Executive Director
- Metzi Anderson,
*Director of Operations
& Finance*
- Barry Matthews,
*Community Engagement
Manager*

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.

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



“

The protection of our agricultural lands is a matter of protecting our quality of life, our health, our environment, and the continued stewardship of a town and way of life we all hold dear.”

Leila Evans

Educator, Founder of the Market Garden School

RICKETSON FARM

Conserving farmland, and so much more.

(continued from page 1)

The challenges that face the Stowe area today are complex, and rarely does one solution address every issue. When we take on a land protection project, we are guided by our Strategic Conservation Plan, a document that outlines our values and priorities for keeping Stowe a healthy and vibrant place to live in and visit. We are also focused on a core group of emerging issues (see letter from Board Chair, page 3) that align closely with our mission. The Ricketson Farm project shows the broad reach land conservation can have for our human and ecological communities, and highlights areas where we still have work to do.

Providing Access For Farmers

As land values rise, so does pressure to develop working farm and forest lands. This has led to a nationwide agricultural affordability crisis, creating a significant barrier to entry for the next generation of farmers. While there are many young and early career farmers eager to work the land, only a few can afford the steep cost of farmland. The Ricketson Farm conservation easement includes an affordability option, designed to help bring the cost of purchasing the land within reach whenever the farm next changes hands. Initiatives like Vermont Land Trust's Farmland Futures program can also help connect beginning farmers with the owners of transitioning farms, and harness the power of conservation easements to keep farms affordable. For now, the Ricketson fields will continue to be leased to local farmers in need of more land. Thanks to the farm's protection, its future remains full of possibility.

Protecting Clean Water & Vital Habitat

Along with the protected agricultural land, a key component of the Ricketson Farm project was the conservation of vital wetland habitat and a rare bog. Located on the north end of the property along the Stowe-Morristown line, these areas are part of a regionally-important wetland complex. Wetlands like these provide crucial flood mitigation, water quality, and carbon storage benefits—essential functions that support community and ecological resilience in the face of climate change. A separate river corridor easement completed by Vermont Land Trust will work to rehabilitate a degraded section of Moss Glen Brook along Route 100. Early in April more than 3,000 native trees and shrubs were planted in the corridor. Creating a riparian buffer along the brook will mitigate the frequent flooding of the area, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. *continued on page 6*

From left to right: Supporters enjoy a snowshoe trek to the Ricketson Bog, pitcher plants at the bog, and freshly baled hay at the Ricketson Farm (photo by Bob Fahey)



Connecting to the Next Generation

(continued from page 5)

Land conservation is inherently forward looking—we protect land today for the benefit of tomorrow. In addition to saving land, we are committed to inspiring the next generation of conservationists. Last year our Summer Naturalist worked with youth and family groups to share the importance of local farms like Ricketson, and we have continued to focus on “protecting what’s possible”—for the farm and for the next generation of area residents and farmers.

This winter Renee Mitchell, Program Manager at The Current, spearheaded the Cows for the Cause project. Beginning as a youth arts project for Stowe Elementary School students, these colorful, hand-sewn cows took the town by storm. Renee and her dedicated volunteers took orders from across the state, and raised \$2,500 for the farm’s conservation. This fall, we’ll continue sharing the history of the farm with local students, connecting them to Stowe’s strong agricultural past and bright future.

Supporting Sustainable Growth

While we continue to protect important land in and around Stowe, we must remain responsive to the challenges facing the community. SLT is acutely aware of the affordable and workforce housing shortage we face, and is committed to being a valued partner in the sustainable development of town. This means protecting the truly irreplaceable natural resources of our area—like the Ricketson Farm’s prime agricultural soil and sensitive habitat—while encouraging a compact settlement pattern elsewhere. Working with partners like the Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP), we can explore ways affordable housing development and land conservation can support and complement one another. **Want to learn more?** Read SLT executive director’s Kristen Sharpless’ op-ed co-written with LHP’s executive director Jim Lovinsky at stowelandtrust.org/news/.

It takes a town! More than 400 individual donors contributed to the Ricketson Farm project! To view a list of contributors, visit stowelandtrust.org.

From left to right: Ricketson bog walk, Cows For a Cause (Photo by Renee Mitchell), Ricketson Farm Silos (Photo by Paul Rogers)





“

There are certain undeveloped agriculture properties in town that have a transformative effect on the Stowe community. Mayo Farm is one. The Ricketson Farm is another.

Ryan Percy

Stowe Dairy Farmer and Stowe Land Trust Board Member

Want to show your ♥ for our farms?

- 1.** Thank a farmer. Tell them how much you appreciate their hard work to produce food, care for their land and animals, and keep farming a part of Stowe.
- 2.** Eat local. See our website for a guide to local farms, farmers markets and community gardens. We'll be sharing additional tips and resources soon on selecting, growing, hunting, foraging, and preparing fresh, healthy food. Because everyone should be able to eat local.
- 3.** Help protect local farmland and provide affordable access for the next generation of farmers.
- 4.** Learn more about the state and future of farming in Vermont. Suggested resources include: Vermont Farm to Plate Network and National Coalition of Young Farmers.
- 5.** Support BIPOC-led efforts working to return land and power to those who have been deprived of their connection to the land for generations. These include the New England Farmers of Color Land Trust, ShiftMeals and Abenaki Helping Abenaki.
- 6.** Show your love with a new We ♥ Our Farms sticker! Pick one up for free at our office or an event!



“

Volunteering to organize a Stick Season Social for Stowe Land Trust was a great way to meet other like-minded newcomers during COVID, and to support this important community organization.”

Jen Vogel Bass
SLT Volunteer

Celebrating our Volunteers

Volunteers contributed more than 300 hours of service in 2021!

For 35 years, volunteers have been central to our work

Stowe Land Trust was founded in 1987 as an all-volunteer organization, and ever since we have benefitted from our members' tremendous dedication, enthusiasm, and support. Through two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, you continued to volunteer your time and energy to support local land conservation, and to building a vibrant conservation community of locals & visitors, long-time residents & newcomers.

In addition to our volunteer Board of Directors, SLT relies on volunteers to serve on committees, lead events, complete stewardship tasks, post flyers, and so much more. This spring, we are particularly grateful for those who assisted in the Ricketson Farm campaign: your letter writing, sign painting, poster hanging, and all around support were instrumental in spreading the word and making the case for the Farm's protection. An especially warm thank you is owed to community members **Peggy Smith** and **Leila Evans**, who served on the Ricketson Farm campaign committee.

This spring, we'd like to pay special thanks to a number of volunteers who remained active throughout the winter. Local outdoor educator **Kendra McGuire** braved the cold each month, offering a series of family programs designed to build connections to the natural world, even in winter. **Jen Vogel Bass, Mikaela Saccoccio & Scott Weathers** organized a wonderful newcomers event, welcoming and introducing new arrivals to the Stowe community and to SLT. And The Current's **Renee Mitchell** spearheaded the Cows for a Cause fundraiser, sewing cows and raising awareness of the Ricketson Farm across the state!

And of course, thank you to the numerous other supporters who volunteered their time staffing events, stuffing envelopes, and more!

Interested in volunteering?
Sign up for our volunteer
email list!

Get volunteer alerts, news, and
special opportunities right in
your inbox!

stowelandtrust.org/volunteer

From left to right: Kendra McGuire leads a family program at Wiessner Woods, Newcomers mingle at the Stick Season Social, Rita Ricketson holds two Cows for a Cause, and our Fun & Friends-led Fall Family Hike to the Mill Trail.





Save the Date

You are invited to Stowe Land Trust's 23rd 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.

Please save the date and reserve your place in the tournament today! Contact Kelly Lilly at (802) 522-3832 or info@stowelandtrust.org.

**Thursday,
August 4, 2022
West Hill Golf Course**

“

One of the first things I did after moving to Stowe twenty years ago was become a member of Stowe Land Trust. I have derived countless hours of pleasure from walking, hiking, and snowshoeing on the trails conserved and maintained by SLT. Because I believe in SLT's mission and want future generations to have the same recreational opportunities that I have enjoyed, I chose to make a bequest to SLT in my will. I am proud to be part of SLT's Legacy Society and even more proud to be part of a community with such a strong commitment to conservation.”

Tessa Milnes
Legacy Society Member

Make a Lasting Gift:
Join the Legacy Society

To learn more, contact Kristen Sharpless at (802) 253-7221, or visit our website.



Above: Surveying a post-storm harvest at Cady Hill, 2018.

Celebrate 10 Years of Cady Hill Forest!

Time flies when you're having fun! It has been 10 years since Stowe Land Trust and our partners worked together to protect Cady Hill Forest. In the years since, it has become the flagship trail network of Stowe Trails Partnership, and a premier mountain biking destination.

To commemorate this incredible anniversary, we're teaming up with STP to hold a three-day celebration of all things Cady Hill.

We hope you'll join us July 29-31 for a series of group rides, naturalist hikes, and community building. We'll explore Cady Hill as not just a rider's paradise, but an important piece of our town's ecological landscape. And you won't want to miss the anniversary party Saturday night, generously hosted by Strawberry Hill Farm!

More details will follow in the weeks ahead. Stay tuned to stowelandtrust.org for more information.

2021 Fall/Winter
Newsletter Corrections

Our Donors
20+ Year Donors
Jon Hanson

Looking for our annual report? We are releasing our financials in a new way this year. Keep an eye on your mailbox for a special mailing later this summer.

What's going on? SLT Events & Outings

Walk in the Woods with Fun & Friends
2nd Tuesdays, 5:30pm, May - August

Full Moon Hike in Brownsville Forest
June 17

Cady Hill Forest 10 Year Anniversary
July 29-31

23rd Annual SLT Golf Tournament
August 4

Family Day at North Hollow Berry Farm
August 6

35th Annual Meeting & Celebration
September 11

**For the latest news
& events from
Stowe Land Trust,
sign up for our
email list, or visit
our website:**

stowelandtrust.org