



2014 Annual Report



Upper Valley Land Trust
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 www.UVLT.org

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Dear Friends,

This report is brimming with joy and promise! Its pages honor both rich individuality and common purpose. Each place we conserve is as unique and special as the people who know and love it. And each is joined in the future that our land conservation work creates -- a future where every Upper Valley resident can know and love and rely on special places.

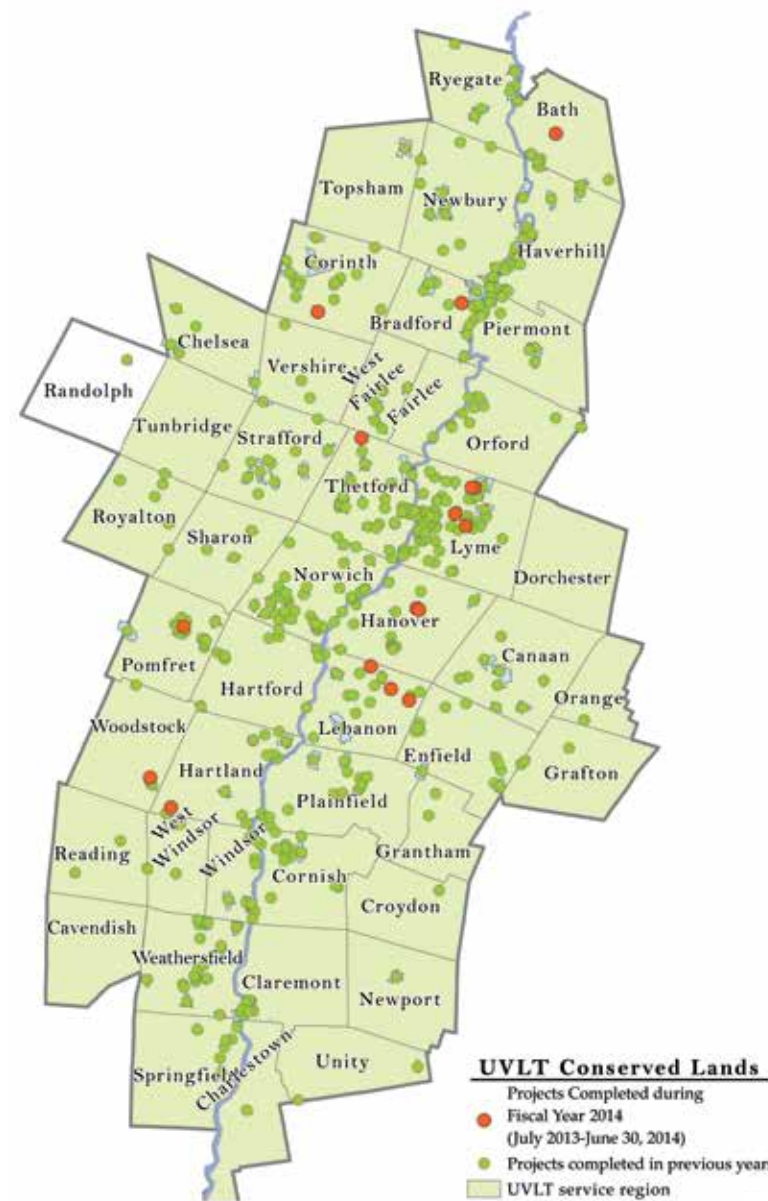
The importance of land conservation to our region's quality of life is clear in each day's news. Our healthy, beautiful, rural environment is the reason that people choose to live here -- whether they are recent arrivals or seventh generation residents.

UVLT's conservation successes stand as heartening counterpoint to national statistics about land fragmentation, sprawling growth and loss of community. Here, old-timers and newcomers, landowners and apartment-dwellers, students and teachers and retirees, volunteers with diverse skills and interests, are acting on a shared vision of thriving farms and forests, clean water, and outdoor spaces for learning and recreation.

In land conservation is heritage and hope, neighborliness and global citizenship, an invitation to learn and care. Each green spot on our map is all that and so much more. We hope you enjoy the stories and images contained in this year's report and we invite you to look forward -- and work forward -- with us.

Jeanie McIntyre
 Jeanie McIntyre, President

Chris Nesbitt
 Chris Nesbitt, Chair, Board of Trustees





The Year In Review

During the 12 months ended June 30, 2014, UVLT completed 16 conservation transactions encompassing 1070 acres. Our projects protected 140 acres of significant agricultural soils; 30 acres of wetlands, 2.1 miles of riparian shoreline and 3.2 miles of scenic road frontage. Five projects secured access for the public. We protected 3.6 miles of public trails and woods roads. The conserved lands include rare natural communities, vernal pools, Mascoma River and Ompompanoosuc River shoreline, and significant historic resources.

These statistics, though impressive, do not convey the breadth of impact, nor the urgency, of UVLT's mission.

The yardstick of land trust success is found not in how many acres or properties or miles of trail are conserved, but in what conserved places mean to people, how they feel about the acres and the properties and the miles.

This year, over 1,000 Upper Valley families and local businesses joined with UVLT to conserve and steward land. 89 volunteers contributed over 1,100 hours of service. Hundreds of people visited conserved lands, hiked our trails, paddled to our campsites. Their stories speak to how land conservation changes people, place, and community.

At our Lyme Hill Conservation Area, 26 Hypertherm associates from the Manual Engineering Group put in a day of hard work upgrading our public trails. It was the second year for the Engineering Group — all of the same volunteers returned except for a few who had departed and were replaced by new hires. The Engineering Group has made a commitment to be there in 2015 as well. Service at Lyme Hill has become a piece of their culture. The work they perform at Lyme Hill is a long term investment passed from one employee to another.

In May, over 100 people turned out to canoe and kayak the northern reach of our service area, where the Connecticut River moves in wide oxbows. The occasion was "Paddle the Border," a semiannual event sponsored by the Cohase Chamber of Commerce, the Woodsville/Wells River Rotary Club, the conservation commissions of Bradford and Newbury and the Haverhill recreation commission. Now in its 11th year, Paddle the Border brings people together "where the river unites our communities." UVLT has conserved 68 properties and 9,000 acres along the route including a 13-mile continuous stretch of fertile river-bottom from North Haverhill south to the Bradford/Piermont bridge. Our staff joined in the festivities, helping to launch paddlers onto the beautiful waterway we share.

A local initiative to plan for and protect the Mascoma River corridor took a huge step forward when a group of municipal leaders,

resource professionals and landowners and conservationists convened in Canaan. Our newest property on the Mascoma is the Mill Road Floodplain Reserve, a place where we can monitor and showcase riverflows and their impacts on the adjoining floodways.

We were out in the woods and on the hilltops too! Our stewardship staff teamed up with the Green Mountain Club Ottaquechee Section to lead a series of day hikes in vast and unfragmented parts of the Upper Valley, where we are creating corridors of conserved land that connect critical habitat and forest resources. Walls, foundations, and old roadways in these now-remote areas evidence the choices of prior generations, just as our conserved lands will express our values in years hence.

Alswell Farm, in Hanover Center, was first settled in 1772 by a local minister and has been

5 KEY AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS:

- **Productive farmland: supporting and promoting healthy local food and opportunities for those who grow it.**
- **Unfragmented forest and natural habitat: supporting the working forest economy and connecting the places plants and animals need to adapt and thrive.**
- **Stream corridors, shoreline of rivers and ponds, wetlands and floodplains: protecting clean water and resilient ecosystems.**
- **Places to learn and play: establishing access to natural areas, parks and trails for all Upper Valley residents.**
- **Local partnerships: helping communities protect landmarks and create new assets as they change and grow.**



What can you learn at Starr Hill?

That the woods are quiet under the hemlocks?

That the tumble of boulders is great for hide and seek?

That there are lady slippers on the ridge?

That you can get from one side of Starr Hill to the other in 15 minutes, but who would want to?

That this place is there for you, because it was chosen.

farmed continuously ever since. Last winter, landowner Ed Chamberlain sought to ensure that the property's historic fields would remain open for future farming and hiking and skiing. He agreed to sell a conservation easement at a steeply discounted value. We organized a fundraising campaign and Hanover residents and friends from across the country sent gifts to make our purchase possible.

When we gathered to celebrate the signing of the Alswell Farm conservation easement in January, neighbors brought sleds and came on skis. The children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the former owner returned to the farm to express their gratitude.

A few months later, about two dozen people celebrated Earth Day by walking together at Starr Hill in Lebanon. We walked in remembrance of Laurel Letter, a dogged and generous volunteer whose kindly efforts resulted in the creation of this 16-acre conservation area in 1991. In attendance was

Ryan Cilbreth, who was a teenager in the neighborhood back when Laurel took on the effort to conserve Starr Hill. Ryan brought his wife and two children to our Earth Day remembrance. He showed us the rocks, ledges, and seeps where he'd played as a boy. His children stood with others under tall trees in a soft rain as we shared our thanks for what Laurel had done.

Through the year, second graders walked from Thetford Elementary School to visit Zebedee Wetland, as second grade classes have for many years. This 27-acre parcel had been slated for development, which would have put at risk a place-based curriculum developed by Thetford teachers. Purchased by UVLT in 2010, the property is now secure. It is a great place to birdwatch, keep a journal, or just close your eyes and listen.

In fiscal year 2014, our stewardship activities at Zebedee Wetland included a major initiative to restore native plant communities. With

The future we build depends on the places we save today.

community volunteers and students from Dartmouth's Tucker Foundation, we relocated and stabilized trail sections that had been impacted by beaver activities. An abandoned beaver dam collapsed this summer, exposing the floor of the pond and providing a front row view of the natural area rebalancing.

UVLT's work provides access to nature, engages people in the experience of stewardship and secures places that add beauty and meaning to life in the Upper Valley.

Conserving land, forever, is a big, bold act -- forever is a very long time. We want the children and grandchildren of Thetford's students to discover Zebedee Wetland in all its glorious variety. But "permanence" cannot be "static," because land is living and changing constantly.

In January 2014, Vermont legislators took up a proposal that would have created an administrative process to review conservation easement changes. UVLT objected to some provisions that would have weakened existing common law that protects the promises land trusts make to donors. Ultimately, the legislation was set aside. We will keep working with our colleagues in Vermont and New Hampshire to ensure that the charitable assets entrusted to us -- the gifts of place -- are truly secure.

As fiscal year 2014 came to a close, UVLT's Board of Trustees were wrapping up a year of inquiry into land trust "best practices," bench-marking UVLT's performance and strategic objectives against the experiences and outcomes delivered by land trusts across the country.

What we learned was impressive and inspiring. Among 16 successful regional land trusts from across the country, UVLT is about average in

size of staff. But our organization holds more conservation easements than any group in our survey and had conserved twice as many acres as the average. With a small budget, we get a great deal done! Our conservation transactions are the result of an incredible ongoing partnership between UVLT members, agencies, municipalities and some very generous and forward-looking landowners.

Our study revealed new ways for us to extend our impact, increase our visibility and engage even more people in our work. Our colleagues are creative and proactive, finding synergy in new programs and collaboration. We end the year with renewed focus on making UVLT the very best land trust it can be -- the conservation organization ready to meet the needs of the whole Upper Valley.

It's permanence that makes the impacts of land conservation so profound...



Treasurer's Report

UVLT continues to be a lean and effective organization. Expenditures were below budget for the year. We refinanced and paid down the mortgage on UVLT's office building in August 2013, reducing the balance from \$234,241 to \$168,327 and saving approximately \$150 per month.

On the membership and fundraising front the news is good, but more work is needed. Nearly 170 new members contributed this year. However, we still have not regained pre-recession membership levels. We have restructured staffing to hire an experienced development director in order to support continued gains in individual giving.

UVLT's permanently restricted fund balance grew to over \$3.4M. Our Stewardship Fund exists to protect the 460 conservation easements that we hold and to provide for the management costs of the properties we own.

While we are tremendously proud of our accomplishments in 2014, there was more we had hoped to do: seven conservation easement purchases that would have protected farmland, wetland and habitat.

These projects had received preliminary grant approvals, but changes in agency rules and procedures or problems with appraisals made it impossible to complete them as we'd expected.

We are committed to building the Upper Valley's capacity to proactively identify and fund the conservation purchases of greatest significance to our region. This is work that cannot wait!

Your contributions are invaluable and we greatly appreciate your support.

Reggie Greene
Reggie Greene, Treasurer

Permanently Restricted Investments					
For fiscal year ending 6/30/2014	Stewardship	Operating	Conservation	Special	Total
Beginning Balance	1,922,657	567,436	478,971	125,504	3,094,568
Distributions	-103,022	-12,217			-115,239
Additions	73,097.5				73,098
Change in Market Value	<u>277,120</u>	<u>65,708</u>	<u>66,142</u>	<u>14,794</u>	<u>423,764</u>
Ending Balance	2,169,853	620,928	545,113	140,298	3,476,191

Sources

63%	Gifts from Individuals	\$450,478
15%	Foundation & Agency Grants	110,019
18%	Endowment Income	128,000
3%	Other	22,826
	Total	\$711,323

Uses

60%	Land Conservation & Stewardship	\$438,340
19%	Community Relations	138,808
13%	Management	94,974
8%	Fundraising	58,445
	Total	\$730,566

Thank You

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Alexander Host Foundation
City of Lebanon
Elizabeth Ferry Speer Foundation
Elizabeth Parkhill Charitable Trust
Emily Landecker Foundation
Hanover Conservancy
Hulbert Outdoor Center
McCollow Family Foundation
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
New Hampshire Preservation Alliance
Saint-Gaudens Memorial
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site
State of New Hampshire
Stettenheim Foundation
Tarleton Fund of the N.H. Charitable Foundation - Upper Valley Region
Taylor Unity Foundation

The Byrne Foundation
The Charles E. & Edna T. Brundage Foundation
The Frank & Brinna Sands Foundation, Inc.
The French Foundation
The Highfield Foundation
The Lyme Foundation
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Town of Bradford
Town of Hartford
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TRORC
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Lyme Timber Company

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