



Da Vinci Bridge *Continued from page 1*

few trial runs in the UVLT parking lot the team was ready to assemble the bridge on site. Part of the ingenuity of this bridge is its portability. Da Vinci originally designed it to be a “tool of war”, a bridge that could be easily assembled and disassembled as troops were on the march. UVLT’s staff and Hypertherm volunteers marched the bridge components out to the site at Smith Pond with ease, about a half mile into the property.

Stewardship Director Jason Berard said, “The materials were easier to carry in because they were shorter and lighter than if we had built a traditional bridge. We were able to build a bridge

whose deck is 32 feet long for the same amount of money as a 20 foot traditional bridge. It should also be more flood resilient due to its height from the stream.”

While Smith Pond has been a hiking destination for decades, the new Da Vinci bridge is a destination of its own. Enfield Conservation Commissioner and outdoor enthusiast Alan Strickland said of the bridge, “I’ve been describing it as a bridge that one would find in a Monet painting. Da Vinci, or Monet, it is a work of art. It’s beautiful and a hiking destination in itself. I love anything with a little flair to it, and that has it.”

VOLUNTEERISM GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS

The Upper Valley Land Trust was one of the first land trusts in the country to formalize the recruitment, training, and deployment of volunteers within an integrated curriculum for conservation easement monitoring. As our portfolio of conserved lands and fee owned lands has grown we have extended volunteer programs beyond monitoring into land management. Currently the total hours contributed by volunteers far exceeds the equivalent of a full time staff person.

Now, we are developing a full menu of options for area employers who want to get involved. UVLT works with businesses that offer paid employee service time as well as companies and institutions using service experience to strengthen teams. Corporate groups are engaged in trail building, habitat restoration, building infrastructure including kiosks, bridges, and picnic tables, engaging in citizen science initiatives and more. With program underwriting from White Mountain Capital, UVLT hopes to more than double the number of participating businesses to 15 over the next three years.



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: DON DERRICK



Don Derrick paddling at Grafton Pond

UVLT has 12 primitive campsites along the CT River’s Paddler’s Trail and we manage them with the help of volunteers like Don Derrick.

Don retired this year after serving as the volunteer adopter of UVLT’s Burnap’s Island campsite for over 10 years. In that time he has opened the campsite each spring, digging a new privy hole, making sure the fire ring and picnic table are in place, and putting out a fresh log book. He visited the campsite a few times during the summer and then closed it again in the late fall.

Don grew up in the Upper Valley, attending Hanover Schools, and enjoying the beautiful scenery of his home. Growing up he saw many people in his community volunteering and how it seemed to be a part of the culture here. When asked why he decided to volunteer for the Land Trust he said he “just joined the crowd.”

Don has lived in a lot of other places in his life but to him the Upper Valley “Just always seems like home.”

Don’s special love at UVLT are our primitive campsites, “I absolutely love the primitive camp sites sponsored by UVLT. Who else would do that? The sites give a great opportunity for individuals and groups to get out in the great outdoors and paddle down our wonderful neighbor, the Connecticut River.”

We’ll see you on the River, Don - thanks for all the good years!

For more about UVLT campsites, visit:
www.uvlt.org/campsitesuv/

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News & Notes

UPPER VALLEY LAND TRUST

Fall 2018

ART IN THE WOODS

Da Vinci Bridge at Smith Pond

Eight Associates from Hypertherm’s Procurement Team spent a day at UVLT’s Smith Pond Shaker Forest with stewardship staff in June. When they were done, they’d created a useful improvement for our popular trail — and they had built a work of art.

Our hiking trail from Route 4A to the waterfalls and pond was built last year with the help of students at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business and a different group of Hypertherm Associates. Since the trail was opened, in 2016, the crossing over Shaker Brook has involved hopping from rock to rock. The waterway is usually fairly small but at certain times of year the water can be much higher, making the brook impassible. As we gained experience leading groups up the trail we also realized that the crossing was difficult and unsafe for some folks with balance issues. It was time for a bridge.

But not just any bridge. We learned about the Da Vinci design from friend-of-a-friend David Fritz, who had built one on his property in southern ME. A Da Vinci bridge is self-supporting. It’s an ingenious design that can be built without any fasteners but can still hold a substantial amount of weight.

After experimenting at the the kitchen table with popsicle sticks and making a

continued on inside



GOOD DEEDS



UVLT President Jeanie McIntyre and Vice President, Land Conservation, Peg Merrens celebrate the completion of the Morey Mountain project with Bruce Durgin, President of the Lake Morey Foundation.

CONSERVED

January - September 2018

Blackmount Farm
North Haverhill, 175 acres

Wetzel-Clay Brook
Lyme, 31 acres

Briere Woods
Tunbridge, 50 acres

Morey Mountain
Fairlee, 149 acres

Areson Conservation Area
Norwich, 231 acres

Ferris Farm
Windsor, 142 acres

Howe Family Farm
Hartland, 35 acres

Uplands and Lowlands Get a Big Thank You

Herb Ferris is a sculptor. He holds his land very close to his heart, so much so that he crafted one of his many sculptures as a “thank you” present to it (this structure is called a “torii” in Japan).

Late this summer, he and his wife Laurie donated a conservation easement to protect their land forever.

UVLT’s communications with the Ferris’s began not long after Tropical Storm Irene brought havoc to roads and bridges along Windsor’s Mill Brook. The Town of Windsor sought a resolution for a 5-acre portion of the Ferris property which had become landlocked as a result of flooding. UVLT was asked to consider ownership of the newly landlocked parcel which consisted of floodplain and riparian habitat. During these discussions, the Ferris’s began to favor the idea of a conservation easement that would protect not only the Brook Road parcel, but a significant amount of their agricultural and forest land along Hewett Road.

The conservation easement covers 142 acres including 45 acres of open meadows. A local farmer tends the hay fields and another farmer pastures cows and sheep on separate pastures. There is a bit of cropland and an old orchard. Bobolink, brown bats, deer, wild turkey, moose, and black bears have all been spotted, and there is a deer yard located on top of a hill that has been extensively studied by the State of Vermont.

Along Mill Brook, the conservation easement provides a streamfront buffer that will protect water quality and help the land absorb the energy of high flows during storm events. There will be only minimal human disturbance of soils and vegetation and the stream will be able to move over time.

From Hewett Road, the public enjoys views across the property to Mt Ascutney. The Ferris’s gift is a wonderful thank you to a treasured place.

Vital Statistics

- More than a mile of frontage on Mill Brook
- 44 acres of productive agricultural soil
- 98 acres of forestland
- Conservation easement donated by Herb and Laurie Ferris
- Town of Windsor contributed funding.

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE: The Howe Family Farm, Hartland

Signatures from 12 members of the Howe family were necessary to protect 35 very special acres of farm and forest land in Hartland. Over the summer, Peg Merrens, UVLT’s Vice President Land Conservation, has been shepherding paperwork as it travels between signers in Vermont, Florida and points in between.

Siblings Paul Howe, Laura Noel and Avery Howe own land that has been in their family for generations and has long served as a focal point for gatherings of extended family and friends. As the Howes prepare for another generational transition, many children and grandchildren are eager to continue the tradition long enjoyed by their parents. The family decided that the best plan for the land is to conserve it so that its character and the joy it brings will remain unchanged in the future.

The Howe’s land along Cobb Hill and Mace Hill Roads has served to shape some of the historic agricultural and forestry tradition of Hartland. It’s mainly forested with cleared fields that offer views to Mount Ascutney. Over the years, the family has cultivated gardens and a small orchard on the property, including grape vines and blueberry bushes, and pear, apple, black walnut, and horse chestnut trees. The property includes productive agricultural soils and fields that are used for pasture. A small pond on the property flows into a stream that eventually flows into



Lull’s Brook and the Connecticut River. Trails on the property form part of a larger community network of cross country ski trails that are managed by Hartland Winter Trails, and a snowmobile trail is managed by a local snowmobile group.

Of special historic note, the property has ties to early settlement in the Town of Hartland and includes the historic Quaker-Willard Cemetery located along Mace Hill Road. According to information available from the Hartland Historical Society, the cemetery was established in 1800 with the last burial occurring around 1882.

Vital Statistics

- 35 acres of scenic farm and forestland
- Winter ski trails managed by Hartland Winter Trails
- Adjacent to UVLT-conserved Cobb Hill Farm
- Site of historic Quaker-Willard cemetery
- Conservation easement donated by Paul Howe, Laura Noel and Avery Howe
- Hartland Conservation Commission contributed funding.

PATCHEN MILLER INTERN: GRETA BINZEN

Greta Binzen of Strafford, VT spent eight weeks this summer working with Andy Boyce, our conservation mapping and field specialist. With many new easements under way, Greta was able to assist Andy with his work creating the Baseline Documentation Reports that go along with each new easement. This work involved both time in the field, getting to know the property on the ground, and time at a desk, summarizing the property into a comprehensive document.

Greta says, “working with Andy was a great experience, I loved getting out in the field and exploring new areas, even when ticks and brambles were involved.”

When asked what she’s learned over the last couple of months, Greta explains, “I think it’s twofold. First, I learned how to read the forests and fields so that they could tell a story. Where I used to just see a patch in the woods, now I can see an old pasture and start to understand the history of the land. At the same time, I’ve learned an entirely different style for conveying my ideas and knowledge. The writing I’ve done at UVLT is much more concise than the work I do at school and it’s helped me to be

more deliberate in my writing.” In the fall, Greta is heading back to Skidmore College for her senior year where she majors in environmental studies and minors in mathematics.



Above: Sculpture by Herb Ferris is a “torii” for his land.
Left: Herb shows his property to UVLT intern Greta Binzen (far left) and Peg Merrens, Vice President, Land Conservation.



Drone pilot John Campbell “flies over” conserved lands from Sawyers Ledges in Bradford.

STEWARDSHIP IN THE AIR

Regular observation and documentation is fundamental to Land Trusts’ promise of perpetuity. Across the country, Land Trusts are investigating the benefits and complexities of monitoring protected land from the air. Some have begun to use aircraft to observe properties, others purchase access to up-to-date data from satellite imagery services. Still others use unmanned aerial vehicles (“UAV’s” or “drones”). This summer UVLT was among them.

With all of the UVLT-protected contiguous open bottomland along the Connecticut River, we expected it would be possible to view several properties in a day and sight lines would be unobstructed.

Our contractor was John Campbell at Blind Eye Video. We arranged for a day’s worth of flying between Bradford and Woodsville. After contacting all of the landowners to explain what we were planning on doing to make sure that they were on board, we headed out.

We were able to monitor thirty properties in one day! We certainly learned a lot about this tool’s strengths and weaknesses, and plan to incorporate those lessons as we move forward.

One thing is for sure, aerial monitoring, whether by drone, airplane, or satellite imagery, will help us cover more ground with fewer staff hours. These innovations allow UVLT’s Stewardship staff to spend more time engaging volunteers and the public at large on our Conservation Areas, which is a growing area of focus for UVLT.