



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

News & Notes

U P P E R V A L L E Y L A N D T R U S T

FOREVER WILD

UVLT Becomes Owner of 923-acre Bear Pond

It has been said that Bear Pond, in Canaan, is a place that wanted to be conserved. When local people showed the property to agency and foundation representatives, moose would appear. Wetland plants, turtles, songbirds presented a compelling case for conservation. On each visit the property spoke.

But just because a place wants to be conserved, doesn't make it easy.

Efforts to conserve Bear Pond go back to at least the 1980's, when the Canaan Conservation Commission approached the landowner about purchasing a conservation easement. Several years later, a small group of volunteers organized themselves as the Mascoma Watershed Conservation Council (MWCC). They began a systematic study of wildlife movement in the area and together with the Canaan Conservation Commission began a sustained initiative to purchase 923 acres of woods and bog which comprise the Bear Pond property.

With a little advice and a lot of encouragement from UVLT, MWCC eventually obtained a contract to purchase the land. Volunteers researched foundations, reached out to grants administrators and wrote proposals. They received a sizeable grant, but the terms required matching funds, and so began a community campaign. MWCC volunteers hosted programs, met with prospective donors, designed and published outreach materials. The hard work went on for several years, ultimately resulting in more grants,

continued on inside

GOOD DEEDS



CONSERVED March 2019 – July 2019

Rocky Hill Farm Meadows
Haverhill, 39 acres

Frost-Pedersen Addition
Royalton, 40 acres added to
153 acres

Bear Pond Natural Area
Canaan, 923 acres

Arzdorf
Canaan, 14 acres

Beaver Pond Farm
Newport, 244 acres

Smith Pond Reed Trail
Enfield, 2,780 feet of trail and



One For the Ages

Newport farmers Becky and Ben Nelson have conserved their land to keep it in agriculture and able to produce food for centuries to come. More than 100 area households contributed to a fundraising campaign to make this happen.

Carved out of the wilderness by Revolutionary War veteran William Osgood in 1780, Beaver Pond Farm has been a family farm for over 235 years. Today, the farm is a highly diverse fruit and vegetable operation. The Nelsons have farm fields on both sides of McDonough Road and a large sugarbush with excellent soils. Their crop production is supplemented by hay, beef, maple syrup, and Christmas trees.

What is grown on the farm is sold at local grocery stores, farmers markets and their popular farmstand along the John Stark Highway, a meeting point between Newport and Claremont. Becky's mother, Norma, is taunting the 90 age mark and is still making pies that are sold there. The farmstand serves as a small economic food hub, as the Nelsons sell other farmers' products and local crafts there as well.

Becky's family has been tending the land for hundreds of years and they don't want their farm to be fragmented or converted -- ever. As the Nelsons planned for a new generation of stewards they sought assistance from UVLT. Funds from selling a conservation easement will help Becky and Ben plan for the farm's future by re-investing in infrastructure and production, and by bringing their son, Sam, onto the farm. He will be the ninth generation to continue the family legacy of agricultural stewardship.

Grants awarded by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, The 1772 Foundation in collaboration with the Land Trust Alliance, the Thomas W. Haas Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and the NH State Conservation Committee "Moose Plate" program provided most of the funding. Area residents and fans of the farmstand stepped up to help UVLT earn a promised matching gift if more than 100 donors contributed. UVLT's Fund for Conservation Action supplied the final funding required.

Beaver Pond Farm is a staple in the community. Support for this farm runs broad and deep. Its longevity speaks highly of its ability to adapt and change with each passing decade, combining the knowledge of the elders with the enthusiasm of youth.

The support for this project ranged widely from large granting entities to advocates of local food, to the occasional shopper stopping in to grab a last minute item for dinner. All proof that local agriculture is vitally important to the health of our communities, to our economic sustainability and to the future of the Upper Valley. UVLT hopes that the conservation of Beaver Pond Farm will be a catalyst for other farmland conservation projects in the furthest reaches of our service area. To aid in their endeavor, UVLT's Farmland Protection Initiative RCPP seeks to increase the pace and scope of farmland conservation in Sullivan and Grafton Counties by increasing the amount of funding available for farm conservation projects. Together we can support local farm families by purchasing conservation easements on viable farmland and forest, keeping the land open and available for local food production which helps to keep our Valley's agricultural future bright. Thank you Becky and Ben for your foresight, energy, and commitment to local food!



Vital Statistics

- 244 acres of working land used for agriculture and forestry in Newport, NH.
- 136 acres of prime, statewide, and locally important agricultural soils.
- 90+ acre, 4,000-tap sugarbush (with plans for expansion).
- Historic "Bicentennial" family farm.
- Over a half mile of scenic frontage of McDonough Road.
- 12,630 linear feet of perennial and intermittent streams (unnamed 1st and possible 2nd order tributaries of the Sugar River).
- Located in an area identified by USDA as a "food desert," where access to fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods is limited usually due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers

Mission Monarch

at Up On The Hill

UVLT is partnering with the Sullivan County Conservation District (SCCD) to create awareness about pollinators and the importance of their native wildflower habitats. We're hosting a Mission Monarch citizen science survey at UVLT's Up On the Hill Conservation area in Charlestown, New Hampshire, near Claremont.

Based in Montreal, Mission Monarch aims to document the reproductive success of the monarch butterfly in order to increase the longevity of this very important pollinator species. Participants will actively search milkweed plants for monarch eggs, caterpillars, and adult butterflies, adding them to a personal data collection sheet. Once data is recorded, it will be uploaded into the Mission Monarch database to be used by researchers and viewed live by other concerned citizen scientists. There are currently 99 recent missions in Vermont and New Hampshire, and we could add many more.

The Upper Valley is home to many monarch butterflies—and many other important pollinating species—and what better way to celebrate them than to “Get Outside” on UVLT conserved lands! Join UVLT and SCCD, get your name in the database, and raise awareness about these beautiful butterflies!



Monarch caterpillar on milkweed at UVLT's Up On the Hill Conservation Area, summer 2018. Photo by Doug Brown. According to naturalist Mary Holland, a Monarch only lays one egg at a time (on the underside of a tender, young milkweed leaf). This may be because young caterpillars are cannibalistic. Learn more at Mary Holland's Naturally Curious blog at <https://naturallycuriouswithmaryholland.wordpress.com/2019/07/12/monarch-butterfly-larvae-are-cannibalistic/>

TAKE A HIKE: Trail To Smith Pond Shaker Forest Conserved

Jeff Reed has donated an easement that provides trail access and parking on land he owns on Smith Pond Road in Enfield. Jeff has owned this land for about 20 years. The trail and parking area have been in place and used by people visiting Smith Pond for a number of years. Jeff has made these amenities permanent by granting UVLT the right to manage and maintain the trail and parking area and hold them open for the public for foot travel.

The trail is very popular among hikers and on any given weekend is frequented by numerous individuals and families seeking an easy hike and wonderful picnic spot at the pond. It provides the quickest and most level trail approach to UVLT's 995-acre Smith Pond Shaker Forest Conservation Area. The half-mile portion on Jeff's property is important to UVLT's conservation and stewardship programming.

This generous gift provides assurance that UVLT will be able to keep the land accessible to the community.



Bog bridges on the Reed Trail at Smith Pond Shaker Forest. The land through which the trail leads is mostly forested and is bisected by two streams flowing into an ecologically important wetland located on the Smith Pond Shaker Forest parcel that abuts to the north.

Work Parties Planned at Lyme Pinnacle

We have a number of improvements planned for Lyme Pinnacle this summer. If you'd like to help, contact jason.berard@uvlt.org to sign up for notices of scheduled work.

Parking – Our application for a permit to construct parking in an old log landing off Highbridge Road has been approved. Given the parking issues at the traditional places, this will be a major improvement! We also have a kiosk ready to be installed on site and will need help assembling it and installing it on site.

Crossings – Proper water crossings are needed at the wet areas along the trail from the future parking lot to Cutting Hill Lane. We hope to have this completed before the parking lot is finished.

Trail Trimming – Before the fields are brushhogged, we need to clear the branches on the hedgerow trees that are encroaching on the trail. We'll stack these into a pile or two, and possibly have a winter bonfire or two to clean the piles up and enjoy s'mores and hot cocoa!

New Trail – We need to construct about 300' feet of new trail to provide a link between the trails on protected property since the trail on the land east of the summit is not protected and the land is posted.

Ongoing clearing of the views!



Mallory Okuly (left) and Paul Blazeovich are the newest members of UVLT's staff team.

INTRODUCING

Mallory Okuly has joined UVLT's stewardship team! As a Land Steward, she will monitor conservation easements, and assist in managing the lands we own. Mallory grew up in southern New Hampshire and attended Bucknell University in Pennsylvania where she completed a B.S. in Animal Behavior with a minor in Environmental Studies. She went on to explore parts of the East Coast and the Pacific Northwest while working as a wildlife technician studying bats, frogs, birds, and other critters. She has lived in Alaska for eight years and began her land trust journey working for the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust on the Kenai Peninsula last summer. Mallory enjoys hiking, camping, skiing, running, and all-around outdoor adventuring with her dog and husband as well as backpacking abroad whenever possible! She is very excited to be back in New England and enjoy all that the Upper Valley has to offer!

Paul Blazeovich will be running our corporate volunteer program as well as assisting with other outreach and events as UVLT's Outreach and Donor Programs Coordinator. He hails from Madison, Wisconsin and earned a degree in Sociology with Environmental and Religious Studies minors from the University of Wisconsin. Paul started his conservation career in the spring of 2017 as a Crew Member on a Wisconsin Conservation Corps Roving Crew and continued as an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator, and Mayor's Crew Field Assistant with WisCorps. Before making his way to the Upper Valley, Paul served as a Crew Leader for the Arizona Conservation Corps in Saguaro National Park, conducting biological surveys and removing invasive grasses. An avid downhill skier, car-camper, reader, hiker, and dog-lover, Paul looks forward to making the Upper Valley "Home."

Sarah Deuell Born and raised in New Hampshire on a farm, an outdoor adventurer, a wildlife biologist turned high school teacher and a passionate conservationist, Sarah is the 2019 Patchen Miller intern working in the conservation field, gaining valuable experience focusing on easement stewardship.



Volunteers have planted potatoes at our food pantry garden at Brookmead Conservation Area. Food produced there will be donated to Willing Hands, a group providing wholesome food to neighbors in need.

Forever Wild *Continued from page*

and enough local donations to purchase the land in 2002 -- more than 14 years after first efforts began.

One of the key decisions for MWCC came early in the campaign. Sweet Water Trust, a private foundation that focuses on large, landscape-scale conservation projects in northern New England, was willing to provide partial funding. Sweet Water Trust grants protect land as wild areas to encourage support of wilderness values. Unlike most conserved properties in New England, Bear Pond would not see timber harvesting or any form of active management – ever again. There would not be new trails or access ways constructed.

MWCC's leaders explained the purpose and nature of these restrictions to the public, neighboring property owners and other funders, creating buy in for this special approach. For 20 years the MWCC owned Bear Pond, subject to a UVLT-held "forever wild" easement. The members of this still all-volunteer organization were phenomenal stewards.

In June, MWCC transferred ownership of Bear Pond to UVLT. This transition resulted from MWCC's careful consideration of long term stewardship commitments and



organizational priorities and sustainability. MWCC leaders love Bear Pond and are committed to its protection forever – beyond the lives of those who nurtured the idea and worked so hard to see it realized.

Working together, UVLT and MWCC obtained the support of the NH Attorney General's office and New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program which had also provided funding for the original purchase. UVLT remains obligated to the grant conditions and the conservation easement.

Bear Pond will always be a wild place where nature's systems can be observed but not tinkered with, a place that wanted to be conserved for its own sake.



Global Connections: Avian ecologist Len Reitsma started a continuous population study on Canada Warblers at Bear Pond in 2003. Canada Warblers have been designated a "species at risk" in Canada. Len's work has contributed to better understanding of migration, nesting and habitat. His research demonstrates the importance of conserving places like Bear Pond where scientists can conduct long running investigations.



Vital Statistics

923 acres, Canaan, NH

- 11 acre pond surrounded by over 60 acres of bog and swamp wetlands, including an extensive floating peat mat, sometimes referred to as a quaking bog.
- Over 1,170 feet of frontage on the Mascoma River.
- 1086 feet of frontage on Little Goose Pond.
- Over 100 acres of additional swamps and bogs and a 5-acre beaver pond; 340 acres of other forested wetland soils.
- More than 460 acres of upland forest consisting of a mixture of hardwoods and softwoods.
- Habitat for statewide endangered plants, including *Arethusa bulbosa* (Dragons Mouth orchid), and other rare plants.
- 5 acres identified as prime Wood Turtle habitat.
- Links 353 acres of other conservation land including the 100-acre Canaan Town Forest, the 216-acre Mascoma State Forest and the 14-acre Arzdorf property. Combined these properties provide over 1400 acres of protected wildlife habitat.
- Ecological research site.
- Scenic backdrop for the view across Little Goose Pond as viewed from Goose Pond Road.
- Conserved by Mascoma Watershed Conservation Council in 2002; transferred to UVLT ownership in June 2019.



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INTERN SPOTLIGHT: MAX NASH-HOWE

Max Nash-Howe graduated with a Masters of Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School in 2017. He is a current Masters of Science in Natural Resources student at the University of Vermont. Before moving to Vermont in 2016, Max spent three years in Central America completing an undergraduate degree and working for a student-led global health and sustainable development non-profit. Max has always had an interest in protecting important natural areas and hopes that his education will help him to effectively protect lands throughout his professional career. He is from Macomb, Illinois.

Max partnered with UVLT for his masters project at the University of Vermont. Since the beginning of summer, he has spent many days, and nights, on Morey Mountain in Fairlee, exploring and documenting important natural features which will be included in the management plan for UVLT's 149-acre Morey Mountain



Max Nash-Howe has documented natural features at UVLT's Morey Mountain Conservation Area, one of the most biologically diverse places in Orange County.

Conservation Area. These features include vernal pools, significant natural communities, hiking trails, rare and endangered species, invasive species, tree inventory, and the general condition of the property. Morey Mountain is one of the most biologically diverse places in Orange Co. and the permanent protection of the Morey Mountain Conservation Area will ensure that no future development or management activities will negatively impact the sensitive natural communities found there. Additionally, Max hopes that his work creating a trail network will give the public a chance to explore the Morey Mountain Conservation Area and understand why its permanent protection with UVLT is important.