



News & Notes

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



Old Trees and Granite Tales Stonehouse Mountain, Orford

There is no stone house on Orford's Stonehouse Mountain, and may never have been. But high on the slopes are pieces of granite with the marks of drill holes. Orford's main village is known for its beautiful "mall," a tree-lined lawn marked with white fence rails held by granite posts. And a few miles away, on Route 25, there is a stone cape. Is this where the quarried rock went?

Up on the mountain, history is obscured by trees. This place now belongs to nature.

Stonehouse Mountain sits just north of Orford/Lyme town line, a bit west of bigger mountains: Mount Cube and Smarts Mountain. Though less well known than those neighbors, the summit and its surrounding forest plays a vital role in a connected landscape that extends for miles. Now owners Bob and Christie Hedges have donated a conservation easement aiming to keep the area intact from parcelization. Their forward-looking generosity has an impact that reaches far beyond the bounds of the 270 acres they've conserved.

The Hedges' property is located at the north end of a 3-mile corridor of conserved land that links to Trout Pond and Pout Pond, in Lyme. And, it also fills a gap in an east/west corridor connecting the Connecticut River to Mason Pond in Quinttown four miles away. This land is, and will be, important to adaptation and resilience of plants and animals.

"Stonehouse Mountain" story continues inside...



GOOD DEEDS



Bob and Christie Hedges

CONSERVED December 2020– July 2021

Old Town Farm
Pomfret, 112 acres

Williams
Norwich, 122 acres

Blake Hill
Sharon, 66 acres

Anderson-Williams
Norwich, 25 acres

Lewis – Woodstock Town Farm
Woodstock, 30 acres

Blendina & Harold Sargent Preserve
Fairlee, 14 acres

Stonehouse Mountain
Orford, 270 acres



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

19 Buck Road
Hanover, NH 03755

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Whit Riv Jct, VT
Permit No. 73

Published by:
Upper Valley Land Trust
(603) 643-6626
contactus@uvlt.org



The FSC® certification logo indicates that this product meets the social and environmental standards of the Forest Stewardship Council®. Learn more about Forest Stewardship Council® certification at www.fsc.org/paper



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Red River Technology

Red River Technology started volunteering two years ago through UVLT's corporate service program. Their first project was creating new hiking trails at Up on the Hill Conservation Area in Charlestown, NH. Since then the company has adopted the property – coming back often for work days and hikes over the years.

"It was close to the office and a great way to get our employees out in the community and making an impact." Said Gina Burke, who runs Red River's Corporate & Community Engagement. The importance of Red River's volunteers to UVLT's work can't be overstated. Having a go-to group of volunteers ready to get outside and work on projects is critical to completing some of UVLT's land management goals. And while their work is important to UVLT, it's also really important to Red River. "At Red River our motto is to positively transform communities where we

live and work. Often that involves sending groups of employees to volunteer together in the community."

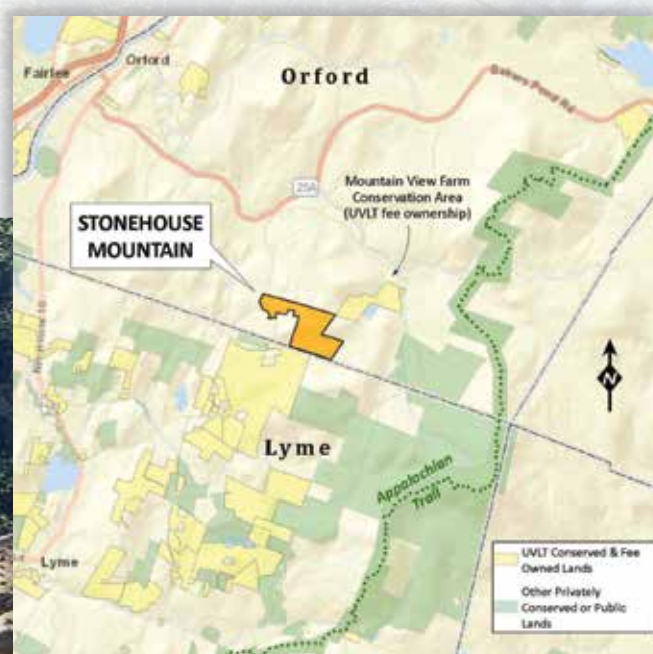
Most recently, Red River was out at Up on the Hill helping UVLT to set up our new food pantry garden. "When we arrived it was 5,000 square feet of grass and by the end of our session the grid was made for the garden and the soil was raked and turned into beautiful rows so the next crew could get planting," said Burke. Red River has also found that the commitment to community service and volunteering with UVLT has helped them to attract new employees, "We hear in onboarding constantly that our non-profit, dedication to the community, and our volunteer program is what attracted that new employee to the company. People want to work for a company that cares about more than the bottom line and Red River certainly does that."

"Stonehouse Mountain" continued from front...

According to the Hedges' forest management plan, Stonehouse Mountain is located in the Monadnock Sunapee Highlands ecoregion, a part of New Hampshire generally cooler and wetter than the nearby Connecticut River Valley ecoregions. Stonehouse Mountain is the second highest peak in Orford, and portions of the property share characteristics of the forests in the northern part of the state. New Hampshire's Wildlife Action Plan, created by NH Fish and Game, depicts much of the Hedges' property as having the highest ranked habitat in the state. Large boulders and rock outcrops provide habitat for bobcat, bear and coyote. In some parts of the forest, large trees indicate a long period of human abandonment.

“Once a major part of the landscape, older forests are regionally diminished -reducing the overall biological diversity of the forest ecosystem. It is nice to see some older trees in the mix on the Hedges' property.”

JEFF SMITH, FORESTER



Background photo: Shallow soil and exposed granite high on Stonehouse Mountain.

Cover photo: Bob Hedges examines drill holes and granite remnants at the old quarry on Stonehouse Mountain.

Cedar Mountain Farm

Nominated for Leopold Conservation Award

The Leopold Conservation Award recognizes and celebrates extraordinary achievements in voluntary conservation by private landowners, inspires countless other landowners by example, and provides a prominent platform by which agricultural community leaders are recognized as conservation ambassadors to citizens outside of agriculture.

At Cedar Mountain Farm, in Hartland, VT Stephen Leslie's and Kerry Gawalt's land ethic is expressed in their farming practices. "We are working to achieve soil health by practicing the six soil health principles as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service" said Stephen. "First among these is to minimize disturbance." They manage 60 acres with adaptive rotational grazing and no-till vegetable production. Soil tests conducted every three years indicate measurable increases in organic matter as well as improved rain infiltration and flood and drought resilience. Their commitment to the health of the land they farm has been recognized by

a nomination for a Leopold Conservation Award.

Stephen and Kerry have been on the farm for two decades. They have a small herd of Jersey (and a few Holstein) dairy cows, 1.25 acres of vegetables, four Norwegian Fjord working horses, and one farm dog who has taken down an impressive 15 woodchucks in a year. Most of the milk they produce goes to award-winning Cobb Hill Cheese, a business in which they are a partner. Cedar Mountain Farm uses draft horse power to reduce fossil fuel use and to reduce the compaction of the soil from tractor tires. The horses used to pull the plow but in the last few years Stephen and Kerry have completely eliminated

tilling from their farm. Now they use intensive composting and cover cropping to maintain no-till beds. The horses pull compost spreaders instead of tillers.

Cedar Mountain Farm is located at Cobb Hill Co-housing, a 23-household ecovillage situated on 270 acres of UVLT-conserved land and dedicated to sustainable living, forestry, and farming. Stephen and Kerry live at Cobb Hill, and credit UVLT, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and Cobb Hill founder Donella Meadows with the forethought to ensure that the farmers of this land would have a place to live at Cobb Hill, making farming affordable.

Photo above: Jersey cows at Cedar Mountain Farm.

IN POMFRET, OLD TOWN FARM BECOMES A CONSERVATION AREA

A gift from Marc and Robin Wolpov has established UVLT's first ownership in Pomfret and increased protected lands in the Wild Apple Road area. Until 1928, the 112-acre property was the site of the Town Farm, (also referred to as the "Poor Farm"), and UVLT's Conservation Area will be known as "Pomfret Old Town Farm." It is the 17th property UVLT has conserved in Pomfret.

About half the land was never cleared for agriculture and has always been forested. Past the cellar holes and open fields where the Town Farm once stood are acres of maple trees. A local family has been using this sugarbush to produce maple syrup for decades. Once it took a sled, oxen, and dozens of workers from the local dairy farms to collect 2,500 buckets throughout the sugarbush. Today taps are placed along modern vacuum lines. UVLT will continue to lease the sugarbush. Neil and Alice Lamson's Fox Crossing Farm will use the field to grow vegetables that are sold at area farmer's markets and through a Community Supported Agriculture subscription program. Income from these leases will offset UVLT's costs of ownership.

A town trail passes alongside the property and is used by the community for hiking, mountain biking, and skiing. UVLT is assessing opportunities to expand the conservation impacts of ownership with ideas including community gardens, stewardship demonstrations and research, trail improvements, community woodlot, and educational partnerships.

In the western portion of the property, a 16-acre area will be managed for white ash regeneration. The emerald ash borer (EAB), an exotic beetle, has been found within 25 miles of Old Town Farm. EAB larvae feed on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. EAB has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees in the Midwest and mid-Atlantic states, and is expected to kill most of the ash trees in Vermont. Following recommendations from forest ecologists, at Old Town Farm female trees have been identified and retained, and small openings will be created in the forest to maximize opportunities for ash seedlings to successfully grow to maturity.

Marc and Robin Wolpov moved to Hanover, New Hampshire from the Boston area several years ago and wanted to contribute toward the Upper Valley Land Trust's important efforts in this region. Their donation capped off UVLT's multi-year Fund for Conservation Action capital campaign that raised \$9 million in cash gifts, pledges, legacy commitments and donations of land. The Wild Apple area has been a priority for the community and a focus for UVLT.

Background photo: A team of Devon oxen till the field where potatoes are planted at Pomfret Old Town Farm.

Vital Statistics

- 70 acres of productive sugarbush
- 5 acres of agricultural land used for vegetable farm
- Significant stands of white ash to be actively managed to encourage white ash regeneration
- Forested wetlands at headwater tributaries to Mill Stream
- Breeding areas for amphibians and habitat for rare plant species
- Extends access from public town trail
- 112-acre Conservation Area gifted by Marc and Robin Wolpov

UVLT SUMMER INTERNS



Grace Cooke

Grace is senior at North Carolina State University where she is studying environmental science and geology. She grew up in Lyme and spent the last two summers enjoying her work at the Montshire Museum of Science.

Grace worked at UVLT's Brookmead Conservation Area in Norwich. Her project mapped the invasive species buckthorn. Before UVLT owned Brookmead, timber was harvested in strip cuts. Strip cutting means harvesting trees in narrow strips to minimize damage and allow for natural forest regeneration. This usually happens in multi-species forests such as Brookmead. But in Norwich, instead of the desired successional forest regeneration, buckthorn took over. Buckthorn has detrimental effects on the forest ecosystem as it shades out other species, deters normal succession, and reduces ecological diversity. Grace walked the property and used GPS software to record its locations, classifying the density as low, medium, or high. The data she collected was used to produce maps that will aid UVLT in making management decisions to remove the buckthorn.

Grace also collected data for the Deer Browse Study, started on the Brookmead property by Jon Bouton, retired Vermont county forester, in 2017. The purpose of this study, which is still ongoing, is to quantify the deer browse at Brookmead using the Ten Tallest sampling method, as deer populations are relatively abundant there. In excess, deer herbivory can have negative effects on forest communities and related value. Data on deer browse is useful, for it informs UVLT whether measures will need to be taken to combat deer-related damage.



Karina Ricker

Karina is UVLT's 2021 Patchen Miller Intern. Karina grew up in Orford and is happy to be in the Upper Valley for another summer, especially since the pandemic reminded her how much she loves being back home. She just completed her 3rd year studying Biology and Contemporary Studies at Dalhousie University up in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Patchen Miller Internship embraces the science, stewardship and sense of community involved in land conservation. A Patchen Miller intern has the unique opportunity to work in the conservation field while gaining valuable experience with a nonprofit organization. The Patchen Miller Internship was developed to honor the life of Patchen Miller.

This year the Patchen Miller internship is dedicated to working with UVLT's community impact programming by supporting our Food Pantry Gardens in Charlestown, NH and Norwich, VT. Our Food Pantry Garden program is partnered with Willing Hands and the Claremont Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry. Using the land we own to grow food for people who need it, UVLT is furthering our mission of conserving land that makes our region more resilient, healthy, and sustainable for all.

Upcoming Events



Stargazing Party at Mountain View Farm
Thurs. August 12th, 8pm-11pm Mountain View Farm Conservation Area, Mousley Brook Road, Quinttown, Orford, NH

Join us for our annual Star Gazing Party led by Bobby Farlice-Rubio of the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium! Mountain View Farm in the Quinttown region of Orford is the perfect place to take a tour of the night sky. Its remote location, 360 degree view, and lack of electric light pollution mean you can see the whole sky on a clear night.

Monarch Tagging at Up on the Hill
Sept. 4th, 1-4pm Up on the Hill Conservation Area, Richardson Road, Charlestown, NH

Join UVLT and the Sullivan County Conservation District for this follow up event to Mission Monarch! At the Monarch Tagging we will discuss monarch life cycles and migration and then learn how to catch and tag them so that they can be tracked on their long journey to Mexico.