



# News & Notes

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

## Don't Wait for Spring - Get Outside this Winter

*How to best enjoy the outdoors  
in the cold and snow*

### GOOD DEEDS



The Sprague Family

### CONSERVED August 2021 – February 2022

**Putnam Farms – Hunter Meadow**  
Claremont, 90 Acres

**Vermont Alpine Farm**  
Reading, 61 Acres

**Carruth North**  
Newport, 22 Acres

**Carruth South**  
Newport, 80 Acres

**Andrus**  
Strafford, 140 Acres

**Windsor Plateau**  
Windsor, 140 acres

**Woody Adams Conservation Forest**  
Norwich, 290 acres

Although winter days and cold temperatures may bring on the urge to hibernate, being active outdoors is much better for mental and physical health. So as daylight lengthens again, don't wait for the thermometer to rise. Get outside!

UVLT's trails and Conservation Areas can raise your spirits, improve your memory and charge your immune system. Research shows that natural daylight increases your serotonin levels (one of the body's feel-good chemicals). And a University of Michigan study found that walking in a natural area impacts your brain's cognitive function. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) suggests that exercise, like walking outdoors, may help your body fight off illness by flushing bacteria from your airways and lungs.

*"Get Outside" story continues inside...*

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Top photo: Fisher Tracks at Up on the Hill. Bottom left photo: Snowshoe Hare Tracks. Bottom right photo: River Otter Slides

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

## Rick Biddle & Bill Bridge

On skates, skis, or snowshoes volunteers Rick Biddle and Bill Bridge are spending the winter months helping UVLT gather data for a study of habitat connectivity in the northern portion of the Upper Valley. UVLT's connectivity study is an ongoing project that uses remote sensing and on-the-ground studies to identify opportunities and develop recommendations for protecting, restoring, and promoting ecological wildlife connectivity in the region. In the winter frozen rivers, streams, and marshes are highways for wildlife and ease the movement of animals along and across them - winter tracking is key to determining these crossings! Bill and Rick are traversing properties along the Connecticut River this winter looking for wildlife tracks that will help confirm the presence of wildlife in these potential crossings!

## Spectacular Jewelry Sale to Benefit UVLT and Children Outdoors



Barbara Haak, devoted UVLT volunteer and enthusiastic jewelry buyer, has donated her jewelry collection to be auctioned online and at Designer Gold in Hanover -- all proceeds will go toward supporting children's programs on

conservation lands, goals that Upper Valley Land Trust has had on its drawing board for several years.

The auction pieces will be on display at Designer Gold in Hanover, NH (<https://www.designergoldjewelry.com/>). Come to Designer Gold to see everything in person from March 25-April 2. Bids will be accepted at Designer Gold and online.

Join in the Triple-Win: Help UVLT create children's programs on conservation lands, honor Barbara Haak's generosity with your purchase, and get a great bargain for yourself. Save the date and look for more announcements as we get closer to the auction dates.



*"Get Outside" continued from front...*

Winter hiking can feel intimidating if you've never done it before. You need more and different gear. Dressing for cold and damp weather can be tricky. Trails may be more difficult to navigate in snow and ice. During mud season it's best to look for dirt roads and well-drained paths. But the sunlight and fresh air can help get us through the late winter blues. Here are some tips and tricks to best enjoy the outdoors.

The best way to introduce yourself to winter hiking is to go with an experienced hiker -- or join one of UVLT's group hikes! Group hikes can be found at [uvlt.org/events](http://uvlt.org/events). Joining with other experienced hikers can reduce the stress of navigating trails in unfamiliar conditions and you can pick up tips from others.

Find all of our trails and conservation areas at <https://uvlt.org/public-access-trails/>, or scan the QR Code.



Background photo: Lyme Pinnacle Solstice Sunset.  
Cover photo: Hikers descending Lyme Pinnacle during UVLT's annual solstice hike.

### Before you go ...

- Dress in Light Layers.** It's always better to be able to add and subtract for comfort
- Grippy Footwear.** Know what kind of footwear matches your activity and conditions
- Know the Weather.** Always check ahead of time for temperature, wind, and precipitation
- Start early and know when to turn around.** Don't get caught in the dark! Know what time the sun sets and temps drop
- Hydrate!** You might not feel as thirsty as you would during a summer hike, drink water anyway!

# Edgewater Farm Grows to Windsor Plateau



## Vital Statistics

- 26 acres of important agricultural land
- 113 acres of productive forest within 4 unique stands
- 1580 feet of frontage on perennial and intermittent streams
- Bald Eagle nesting site (Recorded 2019)
- Potential for informal recreational access on 2 miles of forest trails and connection to other regional trails
- Purchase of conservation easement to support acquisition by Edgewater Farm, a multi-generational fruit and vegetable farm
- Funding provided by a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

The conservation of the Windsor Plateau brings one of the Upper Valley's best-loved fruit and vegetable farms onto a piece of farmland with an extraordinary history.

The latest chapter began about 10 years ago, when Edgewater Farm, of Plainfield, NH was seeking land. The farm has depended on leased land to supplement their own farmland — and some of those leases were being lost to development. UVLT staff met with co-owners Pooh and Ray Sprague and evaluated potential properties for purchase and conservation. We were in the process of putting together an offer on the 140-acre property known as the Windsor Plateau when it was sold to another party. Instead, Edgewater Farm bought and conserved the Putnam Homestead in Cornish.

But when the owner of the Plateau contacted the Spragues last year to say that he had decided to sell, it was time for Edgewater Farm to grow again.

Pooh and Anne Sprague began Edgewater Farm in 1976; their children Sarah and Ray were raised on the farm and have joined the operation which now includes a CSA, a thriving retail market and farm kitchen, and a packing house. Ray and his wife Jenny live at the Putnam Homestead. Their children are the third generation of Spragues on the farm. The farm's labor force includes the whole family, long-time employees, and seasonal workers. All this depends on access to good farmland.

The Plateau, located right at the edge of downtown Windsor, has deep, well

*"Edgewater Farm Grows to Windsor Plateau" continues on Inside Right Panel ...*

# WILLPOWER

Upper Valley residents are finding an easy and powerful way to protect what they love about this region – their wills. Through bequests, life income gifts and beneficiary designations, members of UVLT's Swan Bedrock Society are sustaining our intact landscape, creating a "green legacy" of protected and connected places.

"Estate planning" is a phrase that may seem highfalutin or off-putting to people whose means are modest. But actually, anyone can join the Swan Bedrock Society and everyone should have a will. Estate planning simply means reflecting on your values and considering how you would like your assets (whether sentimental or monetary or both) to benefit the people and causes you care about. Then document it. Doing this feels good – just like the good feeling you get from acts of generosity like writing a check or volunteering or providing care for someone you love.

Perhaps "getting organized" has been holding you back. If so, you've got company. 58% of American adults do not have a will. But there are online tools and checklists that can help. And good, local attorneys who can review and advise — by Zoom or Facetime if you prefer. We've put an online portal on our website that can get you started at no cost.

It's not hard to update the beneficiary designation in your life insurance policy or IRA. Creating your estate plans can be an easy, inexpensive, affirmative experience; appreciative of the people and causes important in your life. Members of the Swan Bedrock Society have in common one thing – a love of this landscape and a commitment to its future. To learn more about the Swan Bedrock Society and discuss how your estate plans can contribute to land conservation and stewardship in the Upper Valley, contact Jeanie McIntyre, [jeanie.mcintyre@uvlt.org](mailto:jeanie.mcintyre@uvlt.org) or (603) 643-6626.



Scan this QR Code to find our portal and learn more about legacy giving.

*Photo: Blynn Garnett's legacy gift provided funds to conserve properties in the North Road area of Newbury, VT. The 314-acre Vines Farm, with this hilltop field, is one of the parcels protected.*

*"Edgewater Farm Grows to Windsor Plateau" continued ...*

drained soils in a 33-acre field running north-south for about ¾ of a mile. It is thought to have once been an island in the vast prehistoric Lake Hitchcock. The plateau is located at the base of Mount Ascutney, a defunct volcano, and sits between Mill Pond and the Connecticut River.

In the heyday of Windsor's industrial success, the Plateau was home to a huge mansion, gardens and magnificent guest houses. On the open land south of the buildings, there was a golf course, irrigated from Mill Pond and enjoying splendid views of Mount Ascutney. More recently, in the 1990's, the Plateau was part of a proposed 121-unit condominium development on Mill Pond. Then a downturn in the housing market stymied the plan and the Plateau land remained untouched, used to grow hay and corn for dairy farms.

Now the Spragues' purchase will keep the land in agriculture, supporting future generations of farmers and farm employees. And the conservation easement provides UVLT the opportunity to explore options for public access, via an informal two mile trail system through the forest. The Town of Windsor has expressed an interest in connecting the downtown Windsor bike path with the Swoops and Loops trails at Mount Ascutney State Park.

The Plateau's location so near downtown has made it a focal point for town history and a priority for conservation by Windsor residents. Town leaders believe the conservation of in-town farm land and access to recreational trails will increase the desirability of Windsor's downtown as a place to live and work in the Upper Valley.



*Left: Jenny and Ray Sprague and their children on the farm. Above: The Edgewater Farm field crew. Background: The view of Mount Ascutney across the farmland at the Windsor Plateau.*

## Upcoming Events



**Lunch & Learn: Abenaki Land Link**  
**March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 12-1pm**  
*virtual on zoom*

**Chief Don Stevens of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk – Abenaki Nation**  
**Zea Luce, Events & Engagement Coordinator at NOFA-VT**

**Alison Marchione, UVLT Programs Director**

In 2021 UVLT began participating in the Abenaki Land Link Project, a project begun by the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk-Abenaki Nation who partnered with Rooted in Vermont and NOFA-VT. As a partner in this program, UVLT received Indigenous seeds, planted and grew them, then donated the produce and seeds back to the Nulhegan Band for the exclusive use by Abenaki citizens. Join Chief Don Stevens of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk-Abenaki Nation, Zea Luce from NOFA-VT, and Programs Director Alison to discuss the importance of land and food security & sovereignty to the Abenaki Nation, the implementation and impact of the project, ways to be involved and UVLT's involvement in the project and our food pantry garden program.

**Lunch & Learn: All About Monarch Butterflies**  
**April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 12-1pm**  
*virtual on zoom*

Join Education and Outreach Specialist and Monarch Enthusiast Dawn Dextraze to learn all about the life cycles, migration, and habitat of Monarch Butterflies. We will also talk about conservation and land management for supporting monarchs on their migration. Information about our two joint monarch programs – Mission Monarch and Monarch tagging – will be available.

*Information for registering for these events available at [www.uvlt.org/events](http://www.uvlt.org/events)*