

OutsideIN

NEWS & NOTES FROM UPPER VALLEY LAND TRUST



CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

A WILD GOOSE CHASE

When Lynn Freeman and Peter Martin bought their Plainfield property in 1988, their neighbors were eager to advocate for its conservation because it sits in one of the region's largest areas of unbroken forest. There are numerous streams, wetlands, and vernal pools — all important resources for amphibians and other wildlife. Red oak, white pine, hemlock and maple grow on high, gentle slopes far from roads and other intrusions.

The couple, who co-founded the Concord Open Land Foundation (MA), were glad to learn of conservation activities in the Upper Valley. Still, they wanted to get to know their new property before charting its future. They made their home there, restored some old pastures, and established a trail system. In the early 1990's they did a limited, forester managed, logging operation as part of the development of the trails. Through the seasons and the years, they observed the plants and animals and let woods grow.

Continue reading inside...

GOOD DEEDS

Conservation transactions completed
July – December, 2023

Thetford Town Forest
94 Acres, Thetford, VT

Martin Brook Headwaters
180 Acres, Lebanon, NH

DeVaux Wildlife Area
35 Acres, Norwich, VT

Goose Chase Farm
401 Acres, Plainfield, NH

Hooper North
28 Acres, Cornish, NH

Hooper South
21 Acres, Cornish, NH

Ely Mountain Conservation Area
9 Acre Addition, Thetford, VT

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UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

19 Buck Road
Hanover, NH 03755

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VITAL STATISTICS

- Conservation Easement donated by Lynn Freeman and Peter Martin
- 347 acres of forest with high stocking levels, including several types of unique forest stands
- More than a mile of frontage on Grantham Mountain Road
- Over 3 miles of stream frontage
- 10 acres of wetland
- 80 acres identified as "Highest Ranked Habitat in the Region" by NH Fish & Game
- Public access on a portion of the property for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting and fishing



A WILD Goose Chase

continued from the cover...

And now, 35 years later, they have donated a conservation easement protecting over 380 acres, fulfilling the hopes of local conservationists and their own commitment to the health of their land and the planet.

Lynn Freeman and Peter Martin joined UVLT as donors soon after they arrived in the Upper Valley. They quickly became volunteer leaders. Lynn served more than 10 years as a UVLT Trustee and was the chair of the Lands and Stewardship committee. Peter trained to prepare baseline documentation reports for conservation easements and visited properties around the Upper Valley to assist UVLT staff. Peter is also a former Trustee of the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation which supports the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest, bringing cutting-edge science to policy conversations about climate change, clean energy, and nature-based solutions.

Conserving their land was always in their plans. Motivating them to move ahead now is a strong desire to make positive and proactive efforts to benefit the environment at a time when the earth's climate is changing so rapidly. Working with UVLT, they've devised conservation restrictions that will not only protect the important wildlife habitat and

water resources on their land, but will follow a concept called "proforestation." This is a strategy whereby a forest is allowed to continue its natural cycle, on a path towards stability. Recent studies have shown that trees continue to sequester carbon long after they might otherwise have been harvested under a managed forestry plan. While managed forestry practices try to nudge a forest in certain directions, they can never fully replicate an "untouched" forest when it relates to the complexity of the micro and macro biomes. An undisturbed tract can become an oasis where the surrounding areas can also benefit, allowing the natural processes of a forest to occur. Lynn and Peter hope their forest can become such an oasis, and become a permanent location for sequestering carbon.

The Freeman/Martin property – which they know as "Goose Chase Farm" – lies at the end of the traveled way of Grantham Mountain Road in Meriden within a larger region long prioritized for conservation by the towns of Plainfield, Grantham and Enfield. A portion of the conserved land is designated to remain open to the public for walking, skiing, horseback riding and hunting, and for continued snowmobiling on an existing maintained corridor.



100 REASONS TO CELEBRATE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

At the end of this garden season, UVLT celebrated volunteers Mary Bourdon, Rika Henderson, and Laurie Wilson, who have been volunteering at the Up on the Hill food pantry garden since its beginning, reaching over 100 hours of service at the garden (each!) this fall. UVLT is not only impressed but incredibly grateful for their hard work and hours dedicated over the last 3 years. It is because of their deep commitment and passion for this garden and our community that we have been able to donate thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables to our partners who distribute to local neighbors in need. Thank you Mary, Rika, and Laurie!



WANT TO GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY? SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER WITH US!



MARTIN BROOK HEADWATERS CONSERVED

The Upper Valley Land Trust and the **Lebanon Conservation Commission** are celebrating the protection of one of the largest and most important wetland systems in Lebanon. UVLT worked with the Commission to secure funds to purchase the 180-acre “Martin Brook Headwaters” property – forested, scrub-shrub, and emergent or “grassy” wetlands, and upland forests studded with vernal pools – for long-term conservation ownership. The property is located just south of the Lebanon Airport and has connections to a significant habitat block that extends into Plainfield. This land, scored as Lebanon’s second-highest ranked Significant Ecological Area in the City’s 2010 Natural Resource Inventory, was soon to be marketed for sale, likely in smaller lots. UVLT will own and manage the property based on a stewardship plan to be developed, with input welcome from the Conservation Commission and community.

UVLT expects to collaborate with the Lebanon Airport to manage vegetation on 5 acres of the property near one of the runways to ensure airspace is kept safe and clear and that tree cutting does not harm wetlands, rare plants, and other conservation values.



A SPORTSMAN’S LEGACY: DEVAUX WILDLIFE AREA



Dennis DeVaux lived his entire life in the Upper Valley, growing up in Norwich, graduating with a biology degree from Dartmouth College in 1978, and residing in Thetford for many years. An avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting and fishing, he maintained a 35-acre woodlot in Norwich behind his childhood home. After

his premature death in a tragic accident in 2022, UVLT learned that Dennis had bequeathed this property to UVLT under the condition that it not be developed, and public access and hunting be allowed.

The DeVaux Wildlife Area is primarily forested. Dennis maintained trails, planted apple trees and managed wildlife food plots, visiting his land nearly weekly to hike, snowshoe and observe wildlife. Located off Goodrich 4 Corners Road, not far from other UVLT-conserved land, the property is ranked highly by the State of Vermont for riparian and wildlife connectivity, physical landscape diversity and interior forest blocks. The land is accessed by a right of

way that crosses a large stream. Currently, there is no parking provided.

Dennis engaged and competed in many shooting sports and was a champion trapshooter. He was Secretary and Trustee of the Vermont Trapshooting Hall of Fame and a longtime member of the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen. Now, as the new owner of the land that Dennis had stewarded, we are learning about him from what we see on his land – his dedication to habitat management and hunting access and his deep Upper Valley roots. We want all who knew him to know it is a place they can visit and help us manage as he would have wanted.

VITAL STATISTICS

- Land purchased by UVLT with support from the Lebanon Open Space Trust (LOST) fund
- 180 acres ranked as second-highest scoring “Significant Ecological Area” by the City of Lebanon Natural Resource Inventory
- 14 acres of headwater wetlands, including a 3.2 acre pond
- Rare plants and uncommon mosses
- Wetlands within a Tier 1 area of “Highest Ranked Habitat in the State” as identified in the NH Wildlife Action Plan
- 1600 linear feet of stream frontage on Martin Brook, intermittent streams and vernal pools

Upcoming EVENTS

ENGAGE WITH THE LAND IN ALL SEASONS!



JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL WINTER SOLSTICE EVENT IN LYME!

Thursday, December 21st, 4:00pm. Meeting Location: Lyme Pinnacle parking lot
Join us for a self-paced hike to the top of Lyme Pinnacle, where we will gather around a fire to enjoy shared company, conversation, and hot chocolate to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Let’s celebrate the official start of Winter, and the return of increased daylight as we watch the sun set!

This event is open to all. UVLT staff will be present to help lead the way and light the fire, but hikers are encouraged to move at their own pace. We will plan to meet at the Pinnacle parking lot at 4:00pm. Please note the descent will be dark, so headlamps/flashlights are required. Other gear (trekking poles, micro spikes) may be useful depending on weather, trail conditions, and ability.



Looking for more ideas to GET OUTSIDE THIS WINTER?

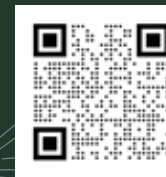
Here are 5 winter recreation recommendations to get you outside and moving:

- 1. SMITH POND SHAKER FOREST, ENFIELD, NH:** There are lots of hikes here, but we recommend starting at the Smith Pond Road parking lot (off exit 15 on I-89) and heading to the pond. 1 mi each way. Provides serene and gorgeous winter views. Snowshoes are recommended if there is deep snow.
- 2. THE DISMAL AT PRESSEY BROOK, HANOVER, NH:** This conservation area is open to the public for skiing and snowshoeing. The trails aren’t groomed, so it may be a more rugged trek, but there is a gorgeous, frozen wetland to explore.
- 3. LYME PINNACLE, LYME, NH:** This hike is a crowd pleaser during any season. Multiple ways to the top make for harder or easier hikes up.
- 4. BEAR POND CONSERVATION AREA, CANAAN, NH:** This one is for the adventurous folks in the group. This is the best time of year to visit the gorgeous, remote kettle pond as the frozen bog allows for accessibility. Use Goose Pond Road trailhead for parking access.
- 5. MOREY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA, FAIRLEE, VT:** The purple-blazed, newly dedicated Barbara Duncan Trail leads one to an expansive view of the Connecticut River valley from Black Mountain in the north to Ascutney Mountain in the south. Trailhead parking lot closed in winter, park on road shoulder immediately south of driveway. Use caution.

GIVE THE GIFT OF LAND THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

Gifts from individuals and area businesses – your friends and neighbors — provide the lion’s share of UVLT’s annual budget. Land conservation is for everyone. UVLT’s supporters include landowners and apartment dwellers; people who own hundreds of acres and those who live on small lots. There’s no gift too small to make a difference – so get involved!

DONATE TODAY
uvlt.org/donate-now



SAVE THE DATE ANNUAL BEAR POND SNOWSHOE ON FEB 17, 2024



HAVE THE OUTSIDE DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX!

Sign up for Field Notes and never miss out on exciting updates from our expert naturalists!



Funding SPOTLIGHT

ADVANCING CAPACITY FOR FARM SUPPORT

UVLT has been awarded two grants by the American Farmland Trust that will increase our capacity to assist farmers and owners of productive farmland. The awards are regrants by the American Farmland Trust, which has accessed federal USDA funding in an initiative to ensure that conserved farmland remains in active agriculture, and that farmland soil resources are managed sustainably. UVLT was invited to apply in part because of the number of agricultural conservation easements we hold.

SOIL HEALTH STEWARDS

A one-time grant enrolls UVLT in the American Farmland Trust’s Soil Health Stewards Program. “An ambitious national effort to engage and support agricultural land protection practitioners in promoting soil health practices with the farmers, ranchers, and others who own and manage permanently protected agricultural land—and on the agricultural land their agency or organization itself owns.” (American Farmland Trust 2022)

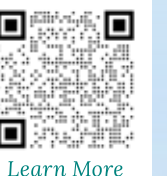
This Fall, UVLT Conservation Project Manager Susie Howard and Land Steward Sayer Wickham joined the staff of regional land trusts and conservation groups across the northeast at a Soil Health Stewards Training that provided information about the basic science and practices of soil health, the economic benefits of healthy soil, and how to engage with landowners and farmers about these topics. They heard from soil scientists, state NRCS leaders, and toured two Upper Valley farms: Cedar Circle Farm and Robie Farm. Susie and Sayer will lead UVLT’s work to incorporate this training into existing conservation and stewardship practices and communication with landowners.



[Learn More](#)

LAND TRANSFER NAVIGATORS

A 4-year grant will support focused capacity building to assist farmers who are planning for transitions in farm ownership. The Land Transfer Navigator Program is a nationwide endeavor to help land protection organizations like UVLT build a network of resources for retiring landowners and next-generation producers. UVLT Land Steward Sayer Wickham will serve as UVLT’s ‘Navigator’ and has begun a series of training sessions with a cohort of more than 60 peers around the country. Stay tuned for updates this spring about this exciting and timely new program.



[Learn More](#)

