

OutsideIN

NEWS & NOTES FROM UPPER VALLEY LAND TRUST

GOOD DEEDS

CONSERVATION TRANSACTIONS COMPLETED JULY '24 - FEB '25

- **My Walden (gift of previously conserved land)**
236 acres, Sharon, VT
- **Walsh Bird Sanctuary**
102 acres, Weathersfield, VT
- **Timotheus Pohl Conservation Area**
75 acres, Hartland, VT
- **Debby and James Crowell Conservation Area
(gift of previously conserved land)**
71 acres, Canaan, NH
- **Putnam Farms, Adams Farmland**
57 acres, Charlestown, NH



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

CONSERVATION AT THE CENTER

Conservation, Recreation and Housing Opportunities Come Together in Hartland

The village of Hartland Three Corners sits amid a landscape of farmland and forest, a center of residential, commercial, and civic life. When UVLT buys and establishes the Timotheus Pohl Conservation Area this month, the vitally important connections between the village and its rural land will be strengthened, enhancing access for recreation, protecting farmland, and providing new opportunities for housing.

Hartland Three Corners is home to Hartland's elementary school, library, recreation center, playing fields, municipal offices, equipment garage, and a fire station. It's a goal of the Town to preserve and promote "the characteristics of the villages that make them attractive, safe, and practical places to live." The village is a location where civic leaders want to encourage growth and development. So, when a key property at the edge of the village faced probable sale, UVLT worked with town leaders to find a conservation solution. The result is a "multi-goal" achievement supported by a Town Meeting appropriation, a state grant, and a fundraising campaign led by Hartland residents.

CONTINUE READING INSIDE...

Conservation at the CENTER

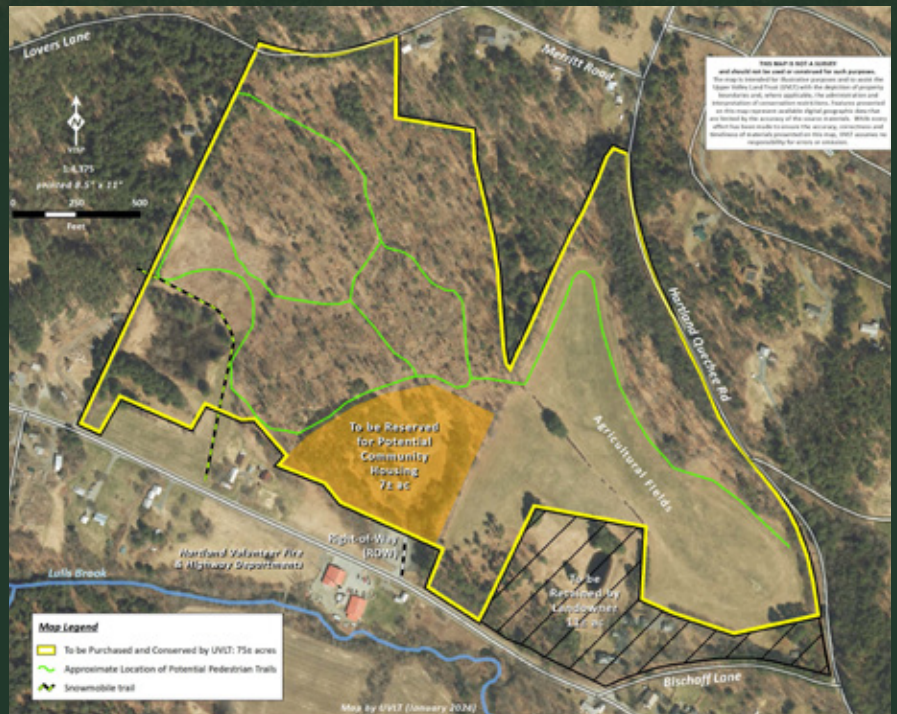
Conservation, Recreation and Housing Opportunities Come Together in Hartland Continued from the cover...

The Pohl property is located just north of the village center, spanning 75 acres of mixed hardwoods and agricultural land with frontage on three roads. Its fertile meadows offer long views from the Quechee Road and Bischoff Lane, with the land rising up to a bluff overlooking the village. Following a recent timber harvest, a large mast of acorns is repopulating the forest with oaks. For years, the land has served as the hub of the Town's vibrant, volunteer-led Nordic ski program, with trails looping through the woods and around the fields. It's a short walk from the post office, village store, and town services. Conserving this land was a high priority for Hartland residents.

Owner Tim Pohl loved Hartland. Dividing his time between homes in Hartland and Germany, he returned to town each summer until ill health and the pandemic made travel impossible. When his guardian determined that the property would need to be sold, UVLT negotiated an agreement to buy most of the land. Mr. Pohl's guardian approved a plan to subdivide a historic home and gardens from the open space that UVLT would acquire and agreed to a contract that provided time for fundraising. Meeting with representatives from a regional housing trust, as well as Aging in Hartland, the Hartland Conservation Commission, Hartland Winter Trails, and the Town's Selectboard, we determined that 7 acres of the Pohl land could be suitable for housing development without substantially compromising the trail network currently enjoyed by Nordic skiers.

After final approval by a probate court, UVLT will complete the transaction and finalize a

trail management agreement with Hartland Winter Trails. A lease with the local farmer who uses the fields will be executed. Under UVLT's ownership, some existing winter trails will be open for four-season use. UVLT will work with and continue to encourage housing advocates to explore options for development in the area reserved for affordable housing. Sadly, Mr. Pohl did not live to see the realization of the community's effort to conserve the property he loved, but the conservation area that bears his name exemplifies the character and legacy that makes Hartland Three Corners so special.



The Pohl property is the hub of the HWT trail system, with 3.5 kilometers of trails on its 75 acres. **Learn more at hartlandwintertrails.org**

Hartland Winter Trails

Hartland Winter Trails (HWT) is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to developing and maintaining a trail system in Hartland, Vermont for the purpose of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Henry Merritt created the first ski trail on his property in the early 1970s. The group's growth initially spread through word of mouth, then expanded with the establishment of

a website around 20 years ago and more recently through Facebook and Trailforks, which offers interactive trail information for recreational users. HWT has grown to over 25 kilometers of groomed trails winding through a variety of terrains on about 30 private properties. HWT remains self-governing and financially self-sufficient. From its humble beginnings to its current status, Hartland Winter Trails stands as a testament to community collaboration, volunteerism, and the enduring spirit of cross-country skiing in Hartland.

WALSH BIRD SANCTUARY

LAND FOR BIRDS & WILDLIFE

For years, Marianne and Michael Walsh enjoyed the property next door to their Weathersfield home. With the permission of the landowner, they visited in all seasons, coming to know the forest, streams, and vernal pools. A few years ago, when they had the opportunity to buy the property, they did not hesitate — and as this newsletter goes to press, they are finalizing the conservation easement that will protect the land they love forever.

The Walshes' 102-acre forest is highly diverse, including two northern hardwood stands, a softwood stand of hemlock, and a mixed-wood stand of hardwoods and white pine, as well as two meadow openings where the Walshes have recently removed invasive plants to improve edge habitat for birds and mammals. The property includes a variety of wetlands, including a basin swamp (forested, shrub, and open wetland) as well as headwater streams flowing east and west feeding Barkmill Brook and a nearby wetland where herons have historically nested. Avid birders, the Walshes have observed over 140 bird species on the property as well as a variety of vernal pool users like wood frogs and salamanders.



Michael Walsh with a huge old maple at the Walsh Bird Sanctuary.

The Walshes are keen observers of the environment close by, but Michael notes that “ecosystems are large and a wide landscape scale perspective is needed to protect against fragmentation and degradation that imperils sensitive plant and animal communities.” Birds, the Walshes say, are an excellent indicator of ecosystem health. Trends in bird populations help scientists anticipate the impacts of environmental changes.

The Walsh Bird Sanctuary is part of a growing mosaic of conserved land in Weathersfield. It is within a mile of six other UVLT-conserved parcels; 16 conserved properties are within two miles.

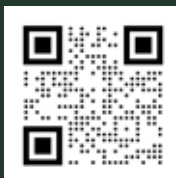
The Walshes intend to let their forest grow. They will gently manage it for habitat and personal recreation while the forest regenerates and adapts to climate change and forest pathogens. The conservation easement provides for public access on a trail loop on woods roads. Walkers and snowshoers (no wheels, please!) are welcome to bring binoculars to observe and listen quietly at the sanctuary the Walshes have protected.

VITAL STATISTICS

- 102 acres of diverse forest habitat ranked as a priority interior forest block by the State of Vermont
- Headwater stream feeding Barkmill Brook and ecologically significant downstream wetlands
- 140 bird species identified on the property
- Scenic views of the Connecticut River Valley, the Green Mountains, Mount Ascutney, and the Camp Hill ridgeline
- Access for hiking, snowshoeing, birdwatching, and observing nature
- Located with a mile of six UVLT-conserved properties
- Conservation easement donated by Michael and Marianne Walsh
- Stewardship fund supported by the Weathersfield Land Preservation Association

Upcoming EVENTS

Engage with the land in all seasons and join us for one of UVLT's upcoming winter events! Whether you're interested in connecting with nature, building community, or experiencing conservation in action, there's something for everyone.



DON'T MISS OUT

Visit our website for more information and to register today!

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE

- **The Fox Paw Tracking Club Workshop**
- **Bear Pond Snowshoe**
- **Stonehouse Mountain Winter Hike with the Orford Conservation Commission**
- **The Annual Hartland Winter Trails Tiki Trek**
- **UVLT Volunteer Easement Training**
- **...and more!**

A Lasting LEGACY

GARY BROOKS PLANS GIFT FOR TRAIL

Gary Brooks and his late wife Barbara Duncan enjoyed hiking Morey Mountain and the long views down the Connecticut River Valley from the vista at the top. Now Gary has taken the long view by arranging a legacy gift to UVLT through his IRA to sustain the trail that bears Barbara's name.

"The dedication of the Barbara Duncan Trail on Morey Mountain to honor Barbara was such a wonderful gift to our family from UVLT, the Lake Morey Foundation, the Lake Morey Protective Association and our dear Lake Morey friends," Gary said. "I wanted to provide a fund for the maintenance and preservation of the Trail in perpetuity, essentially endowing my annual gifts to UVLT for these purposes."

The gift's proceeds will establish a perpetual fund for the benefit of the trail. With his legacy commitment, Gary joins more than sixty members of the Swan Bedrock Society who have arranged planned gifts for UVLT through their wills, IRA's, life insurance and estate plans.



THE SWAN BEDROCK SOCIETY

Learn about the Swan Bedrock Society or contact
Jeanie McIntyre at jeanie.mcintyre@uvlt.org



Above: Gary Brooks is the newest member of UVLT's Swan Bedrock Society.

Below: In September 2023, the trail up Morey Mountain was named in honor of Barbara Duncan, an avid hiker, environmentalist, and advocate for Lake Morey, the Upper Valley community, and the surrounding mountains.



A Place of LEARNING

PARTNERS ON THE GROUND AT BROOKMEAD CONSERVATION AREA



Late last fall, UVLT's Brookmead Conservation Area in Norwich was the site of an in-the-field educational program for staff of the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Vermont State Resource Conservationist Jim Eikenberry and Soil Conservationist Lucy Zendzian, provided training on hydric and non-hydric soil identification. NRCS helps landowners develop conservation plans and provides advice on the design and implementation of practices to protect soil and water resources. Brookmead was a good site for the program because of its variety of wetland, wet meadow and upland soils, as well as easy access from our trailhead parking area.

UVLT Land Steward Alexander van Engelen joined to learn with the trainees as they dug small holes and examined soils. A year earlier, UVLT staff had previously staked the edges of areas predicted to be wetlands based on plant species. The NRCS field work largely confirmed those predictions! We are pleased to support and learn alongside our NRCS partners.

"NRCS provides frequent field trainings to our staff and the many staff at partner organizations that assist us in our conservation efforts. We need locations with access to fields and forest, ideally the permission to dig a small hole or two, and a parking lot able to accommodate 5 to 10 vehicles depending on the training. We've lacked a good training site in Eastern Vermont, Brookmead was a great location that we sincerely appreciated being able to use." — Jim Eikenberry

On The TRAIL

NEWS FROM STRAFFORD & ORFORD

The 382-acre Manning Farm was conserved in 2018 and is now owned by Earl Ransom and Amy Huyffer of nearby Rock Bottom Farm, an organic dairy. Read more of the conservation story and our partners at uvlt.org/public-access-trails-and-conservation-areas/.

For more than 50 years, Roscoe and Ruth Manning cared for the fields and forests of their farm, milking cows, growing a huge garden, sugaring, harvesting timber, and raising their family. After their deaths, their children worked with UVLT to conserve 382 acres before selling the land to Earl Ransom and Amy Huyffer of nearby Rock Bottom Farm, an organic dairy. UVLT used its Fund for Conservation Action to buy the conservation easement, and Strafford residents provided the final 10% of the transaction costs. At the time, the Alliance for Vermont Communities and the Upper Valley Trails Alliance were also involved with trail planning and initial construction.



The Stonehouse Mountain Trail in Orford has a loop and some nice new views! Volunteers Paul Gagnon and Chris Gothberg and landowner Bob Hedges came out for a trail workday that added a half mile loop to the existing trail. Cutting a handful of carefully selected trees created openings with views easterly to Smarts Mountain, and southerly toward Moose Mountain, Ascutney and as far west as Killington and Pico. The Stonehouse Mountain Trail is located on 270 acres of conserved land with granite outcrops, ephemeral streams, and forest habitat ranked as some of the best in the state.

Photos and Instagram post by volunteer Chris Gothberg:

"I was thrilled to be able to join @uppervalleylandtrust and @j_berard yesterday for a trail workday clearing a loop trail with a couple viewpoints on Stonehouse Mountain in Orford. The trail traverses through some beautiful hillside cathedral Spruce forests, some stunted, gnarly, old Red Oak woods, and the stunning, mature Red Pine and Spruce forests that grow along its ridgecrest. It was a treat seeing everything cloaked in early December white."

Chris is a volunteer adopter at UVLT's Clay Brook Trail, which is slated for a major refresh once conditions are suitable next spring. Want to join in the work? Contact cassie.bernyk@uvlt.org and we'll let you know when workdays are planned.



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

19 Buck Road
Hanover, NH 03755

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

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

Volunteer SPOTLIGHT

WE GET BY WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

In 2021, UVLT expanded our Food Pantry Garden program to our Up on the Hill Conservation Area in Charlestown, NH. That fall, Charlestown resident Mary Bourdon joined our weekly volunteer workdays and has been coming back every season since. Mary and a few other dedicated volunteers care for and harvest vegetables that we share with the local community at the Claremont Soup Kitchen and the Charlestown Food Shelf. During the 2023 and 2024 season, Mary continuously went above and beyond to care for the garden, often stopping by outside of standard volunteer workdays to check up on the garden. No task is too small for Mary, whether it be extra watering or hand-picking potato beetles off our plants.

This season, Mary took the lead on woodchuck proofing many of our garden beds to keep out one pesky woodchuck that was persistent throughout the garden season. Mary used any materials we had available in our shed to outsmart "Chuck," using various wire fencings for cages and creating her own low hoop system to protect our young crops. We are so grateful for Mary's dedication to the garden and her innovative thinking to ensure its long-term success.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE TEAM?

Join our team of dedicated volunteers and help make a difference!
Sign up for our volunteer opportunities newsletter today!

