

# Mountain Views

Quarterly Newsletter of Stowe Land Trust

Spring 2011



## Bingham Falls 10th Anniversary

© Alden Pellet

On June 29, 2000 the Stowe Reporter ran a cover story with the headline “Bingham Falls Sale Galvanizes Preservationists”. The community had learned the week before that the 40 foot cascading waterfall and surrounding gorge had been sold to developers. Since 1880 the McMahon and McSweeney families had owned and managed Bingham Falls and the surrounding undeveloped land.

With landownership changing hands and a threat to public access of the popular swimming hole, SLT and its partners began a conversation about permanent protection of this statewide treasure.

The future of Bingham Falls continued to be a hot issue throughout the rest of the year. Headlines and editorials in the news read “Bingham Falls Access in Doubt”, “Bingham Falls Future Up to Stowe Voters”, “Think Before You Vote to Buy Bingham Falls”, and “Bingham Falls the Soul of Stowe”

It wasn't until January, 2001 that a sales agreement was reached with Old Colony

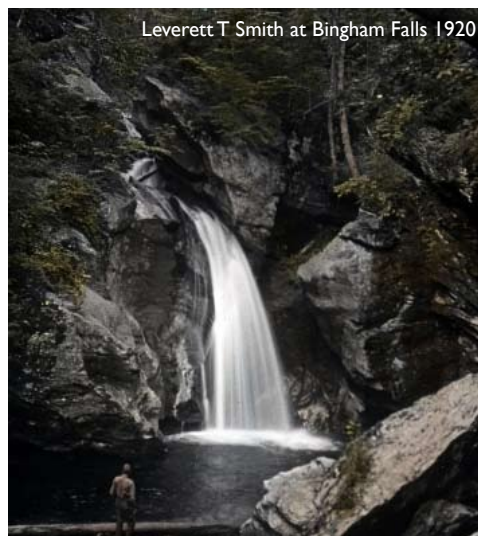
Construction Company and funders were approached about supporting the \$1 million project. Funding for the acquisition came from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Freeman Foundation, the Lintilhac Foundation, private individuals and the Town of Stowe. The community passed a ballot measure by a 2:1 margin to contribute up to \$300,000 to permanently protect the cherished natural feature. In April, 2001 SLT

purchased 72 acres including Bingham Falls, transferring ownership to the State of Vermont while retaining a conservation easement.

Even though Bingham Falls had been privately owned, has long been used by the public for swimming and recreation. Managed by the State of Vermont as part of Mt Mansfield State Forest, the property is regularly visited by swimmers on hot summer days. It is also used for hiking, snowshoeing, picnicking, ice climbing, cross country skiing and other low impact activities.

Just like in 2001, Stowe Land Trust continues to be humbled and grateful for the overwhelming support the community shows for protecting our special places. Thank you!

*Celebrate Bingham Falls with a visit. You can access the property from Route 108, look for a gravel pull-off just before the entrance to Smugglers' Notch State Park. For a different perspective of the Falls, take the trail from the SLT owned Mill Trail property off Notchbrook Rd. Visit [www.stowelandtrust.org](http://www.stowelandtrust.org) for more information.*



"Each generation has its own rendezvous with the land, for despite our fee titles and claims of ownership, we are all brief tenants on this planet. By choice or by default, we will carve a land legacy for our heirs."  
— Stuart L. Udall

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Stowe Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation of scenic, recreational, and productive farm and forest lands for the benefit of the greater Stowe community.

All contributions to Stowe Land Trust are tax deductible. Please become a member today.

## From the Executive Director and Board Chair



*Heather Furman*



*Cliff Johnson*

It's hard to believe that only 10 years ago, the beloved natural area Bingham Falls could have been lost to development – denying the public the opportunity to enjoy one of the most spectacular natural features in Vermont. For generations, the 40 foot waterfall has drawn visitors for a refreshing dip in its chilly mountain waters. Natural resources like Bingham Falls belong, I believe, in the public domain. Because of the investment made by you, the Town, State of Vermont and SLT, we are able to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its permanent protection.

Each year spring brings a renewed sense of optimism and opportunity; opportunities to conserve those unique parts of our landscape that provide so much value to our community; opportunities to get outside and connect once again with the stewardship of our natural world. SLT's field season will be busy this year (pg.7), with trails to manage and signs to install. We hope you will join us on National Trails Day, June 4th.

We take a moment this issue to celebrate the accomplishments in 2010 you helped make possible (pg.4-5). While we did not complete a land protection project it wasn't for lack of effort. Your continued membership support allowed staff to engage directly with landowners interested in conservation, carefully evaluate properties, and build relationships necessary to protect important lands in the future.

### Leave Your Legacy

Stowe Land Trust has pledged to forever care for land you, as a member, are helping conserve today.

By including Stowe Land Trust in your estate planning, you can continue to make a difference for generations to come.

Contact Executive Director, Heather Furman by calling 802.253.7221 or email [heather@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:heather@stowelandtrust.org) for more information or to let us know that you have named SLT in your will.



Your support allowed SLT to make major investments in its conserved lands, from the bridge at Adams Camp to trail work at Kirchner and Wiessner Woods.

Optimism and opportunities don't just come along in the spring. SLT Board of Directors has been deeply engaged in a strategic planning process that will set the organization on a path to proactively address our conservation goals and be prepared to seize conservation opportunities when presented. We will soon begin implementing our new plan which will guide our work over the next 3 years. Your feedback and ideas help shape the work we do in this community. If you have thoughts or ideas about our Strategic Goals (pg. 6) please send me an email, [heather@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:heather@stowelandtrust.org). I look forward to hearing from you.

As always, I want thank you for being a member of Stowe Land Trust. Our achievements would not be possible without you.

### Tax Incentives for Conserving Your Land in 2011

If you are considering a conservation easement donation, now may be the time to act. Landowners who donate a qualified conservation easement in 2011 will be able to:

- Increase their charitable deduction from 30 percent to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income (AGI) in the year of their gift (qualified farmers may deduct up to 100 percent of AGI); and,
- Carry over any unused deduction for up to 15 years, instead of 5 years.

Please contact us to learn more!



# stowe land jam with the Sugardaddies



March 26th at the Matterhorn was more than just a great party, it was also a fundraiser for Stowe Land Trust. And by all accounts it was a tremendous success - we had a great time and succeeded in raising more than \$5,000.

The important and creative ways in which the community shows their support for land conservation is incredible. The success of the Land Jam would not have been possible without the participation of dozens of individuals and businesses.

**Please show your appreciation  
for our supporter's generosity  
by giving them your business.**

## Stowe Land Jam Supporters

The Matterhorn  
The Sugardaddies  
(Barry Lyden, Chris Tagatac, John Spencer,  
Eric Gershman & Trevor Crist)

Guest Musicians  
(Pat Berry & Mike Snyder)

Trisha Fong  
Mammut  
Burton

Stowe Mountain Resort  
Darn Tough VT  
Topnotch

Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm  
Outdoor Research  
Isis

Trina Hosmer  
Eating Well  
Oxygen

Trapp Family Lodge  
SKIDA

Isis for Women  
Stoweflake

Stowe Kitchen Bath & Linens  
In Company  
Iride

Elmore Mountain Farm  
Gerry Scott  
Petra Cliffs  
VT Peanut Butter Co.

**Thank You!**

## The Scoop On Dog Poop

It's this time of year when the snow is melting and the streams are running high that we are reminded of winter's dog walking indiscretions. Suddenly the trails are littered with pet waste we optimistically hoped would disappear before the snowpack dwindled.

Scoping your dog's poop isn't just a courtesy for those walking behind you; it is also the healthy and environmentally friendly thing to do.

Pet waste can be a significant source of water pollution. When not properly disposed of, it can be carried by rain or snow runoff into nearby streams. Pet waste can also carry bacteria that is harmful to people and pets.



Being part of the solution is easy. Carry a bag with you when you take your dog for a walk so you can scoop it, bag it and dispose of it properly. When there is no trash can available, as on many of the lands conserved by SLT, you will have to carry it out.

Throwing bags in the woods or leaving them beside the trail is not proper disposal because it does not remove the waste from the environment.

The next time you visit Wiessner or Kirchner Woods with your dog don't forget to bring a bag!

We welcome your questions or comments. Feel free to contact us at 802.253.7221 or send an email to [becca@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:becca@stowelandtrust.org).

## Spring is Mud Season!

During spring mud season, trails are particularly vulnerable to erosion because of excessively wet conditions. Hikers are asked to stay off high elevation trails until Memorial Day. Several conserved properties around Stowe are good places to stretch your legs this spring. The trail at Pinnacle Meadow is a great walk with an amazing view of town. Check out the Blood Root wildflower population along Alex's Trail on the SLT owned DuMont property in Moscow.



For driving directions, visit:  
[www.stowelandtrust.org/conserved](http://www.stowelandtrust.org/conserved).

# 2010 Annual Report

## A Year in Review



### Land Protection

- Worked with a landowner on feasibility for conserving a 20+acre property in the West Hill area. Awarded VHCB grant for scoping.
- Conducted site visits with landowners in Stowe village, Stowe Hollow, and Elmore Mt. Rd, interested in protecting their land.
- Worked with landowner in Stowe Hollow on estate planning.
- Worked with The Nature Conservancy on a land protection partnership opportunity in Morristown.
- Partnered with the Town of Stowe and trail user groups to identify and prioritize threatened recreation resources.
- Supported the Waterbury Conservation Commission with conversations with a local farm owner about options for conservation.



### Stewardship

- Constructed 64 foot long pedestrian bridge to re-establish public access across the Ranch Brook to Adams Camp.
- SLT staff and volunteers completed and documented annual monitoring visits for all 28 properties conserved by SLT.
- Worked with Cushman Design Group to assess public access to the Mill Trail Moravian Cabin and develop recommended structural improvements.
- Completed significant trail improvements at Wiessner Woods.
- Designed and installed kiosks at Wiessner and Kirchner Woods.
- Constructed 3 miles of trail and a parking area at Kirchner Woods.
- Dedicated hundreds of SLT staff hours to assist owners of conserved land with achieving their management objectives.
- Installed boundary markers at Kirchner and Wiessner Woods.

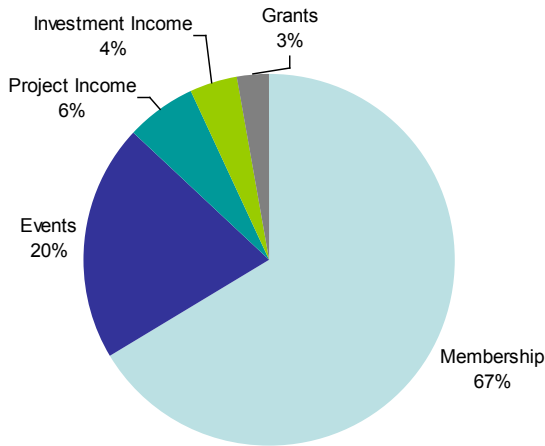


# Community

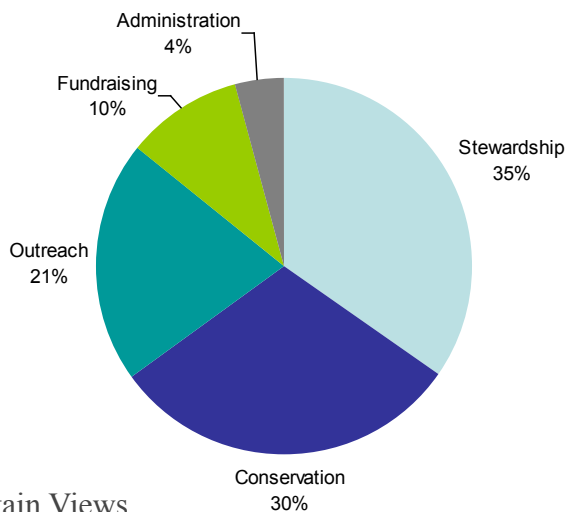
- Earned national accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.
- Hosted a snowshoe, wildflower walk and mountain bike ride to celebrate our conserved lands.
- Conducted trail work with numerous youth volunteer groups including the Laraway School, VYCC, and Blessed Sacrament Bible Camp.
- Celebrated National Trails Day with a volunteer trail work day at Wiessner Woods.
- Held grand opening celebration for the trails at Kirchner Woods with friends and family members of Jerry Kirchner.
- Held several successful events including a wine tasting, the Stowe Land Jam, the Stowe Trail Race Series, the 11th Annual Golf Tournament, Pie in the Sky's Benefit Bake and an Ember Photo slideshow which helped us raise funds for conservation and connect with our community.



## Operating Revenue - \$212,907



## Operating Expenses - \$210,923



# Membership & Finance

Stowe Land Trust launched the Pinnacle Society in 2010 as a way to recognize those members who are the foundation of SLT's ability to respond to land conservation opportunities and provide high quality stewardship over time. At the close of 2010 we were pleased to report that sixty individuals, businesses and foundations had joined as Charter members contributing 45% of SLT's annual operating income.

Membership continues to be the driving force behind our operations, contributing more than 65% to our annual operating income. Three quarters of our members renew each year and we are steadily increasing our membership with 45 new members in 2010. 11% of members in 2010 were friends that joined again after missing a year or two. Welcome back!

Our planned giving program was established to ensure the long-term care and management of lands conserved by Stowe Land Trust. For many people, a bequest offers the opportunity to make a more substantial gift than would be possible during one's lifetime. Three individuals contacted us in 2010 to let us know SLT was named in their will.

## 2010 Restricted Accounts Summary

### Income

Grants	\$	0
Investment	\$	4,216
Land Protection	\$	1,500
Stewardship	\$	66,778
	\$	<b>72,494</b>

### Expense

Land Protection	\$	1,500
Stewardship	\$	140,490
	\$	<b>141,990</b>

Pinnacle Society members are invited to join Stowe Land Trust on **Saturday, July 23, 2011** for a walk and talk about Wild Edibles with expert forager and author Russ Cohen.

Russ will lead an outing from 1:00 to 4:30 pm introducing you to some of the tastiest wild plant species our area has to offer. You will learn about species identification, seasonality and preparation methods, along with general guidelines for safe and environmentally responsible foraging. Look for your invitation in the mail in late May.

If you are interested in becoming a Pinnacle Society member, please contact Executive Director, Heather Furman at 802.253.7221 or send an email to: [heather@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:heather@stowelandtrust.org).

Friend of Stowe Land Trust (2)  
Bill and Nancy Anderson  
Charlie and Gibby Berry  
Philip Branton and Ellen Lazarus  
Rick and Ann Bresnahan



Donna and Jake Carpenter  
Kitty and Alan Coppock  
Denise Burt Cushwa  
The James E. Robison Foundation  
Manuel and Marianne del Valle  
Peter and Deborah Dodson  
Trowbridge and Claudia Elliman  
Tom and Mary Evslin  
Michael Fenlon and Linda Sallop  
Mark and Liza Ferguson  
Vera Firzgerald  
Robert and Jana Giordano  
Gerry and Terry Griffin  
Diane and Andreas Halvorsen  
David Harding and Jan Nyquist  
Christopher Hill and Susan Flicop  
Richard and Clea James  
Cliff Johnson  
Frank and Marion Kellogg  
John and Diane Kemp  
Bonnie Knight

Jack and Laura Lancaster  
Susan Leadem  
George Lengvari  
Lefty and Joyce Nichols Lewis  
Clare Tweedy McMorris  
Bunny and Peter Merrill  
John and Millie Merrill  
Melissa and David Norton  
Dan and Cookie Owen  
Jack and Caroline Patten  
John and Adrienne Peacock  
Michael and Deborah Pucillo  
Maureen and Michael Ruetters  
James and Ruth Santos  
Nicholas A. Skinner  
Oliver and Gay Slesar  
Shapleigh and Peggy Smith  
Lee and Alice Spencer  
Stires Stark Family Foundation  
Tortimaki Foundation - Mr. and Mrs. Taussig  
Union Bank  
Vermont Community Foundation - Peter and Bari Dreissigacker  
Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli  
Richard and Sally Watts  
David Wilkens and Molly Pindell  
Roger M. and Jill J. Witten  
Norris and Judy Wolff

*Thank you - we are grateful for your support!*

*Pinnacle Society members joining after April 15th will be recognized in the summer issue of Mountain Views.*

## Preparing for the Next Twenty Five Years

According to the Land Trust Alliance, over the next 40 years the U.S. will add another 100 million people to our landscape, placing extreme pressure on our most exquisite natural areas, precious agricultural soils, and dwindling wildlife habitat.

Clearly, the need for robust local land trusts is stronger than ever. At a time when many are questioning big government and increasing property taxes, land trusts offer an efficient, local approach to protecting clean water, wildlife habitat, key recreation lands and our working farms.

As Stowe Land Trust approaches its 25th anniversary, we believe that a comprehensive strategic plan is necessary to guide our work, maximize the pace of land protection, make the best use of our resources, and truly act on our community's conservation desires.

To that end, SLT hired a consultant in January to shepherd us through the process of developing a 3 year strategic plan. This plan

will guide SLT in putting systems in place to sustain a healthy Board, pro-active planning, and thoughtful land conservation.

But our goal is also to develop a plan that's a reflection of our members and the community as a whole. SLT began gathering input in 2009 by soliciting feedback through a survey to our members. SLT also hosted a community leader's forum to gather input on issues ranging from our geographic focus, to fundraising, to the kinds of land protection projects that resonate most. This process helped us understand where we should focus our resources and how best to protect the lands that are most important to this community.

While land protection remains at the core of SLT's work, other goals, such as ensuring the lands we've conserved are maintained and managed for their conservation values, and providing meaningful outreach and engagement opportunities, are equally critical to our success.

### SLT's Strategic Goals

1. Conservation: The essential character of the Stowe landscape is conserved through pro-active and responsive land protection.
2. Stewardship: SLT conserved and owned properties are sustainably managed to protect their conservation values.
3. Fundraising: SLT has sufficient funds to meet its conservation goals and fulfill its perpetual conservation obligations, stewardship obligations and annual operations.
4. Solid Organization: Effective people and systems throughout the organization provide direction, resources, and follow-through to support SLT's mission.
5. Reputation: SLT has a solid reputation as an essential community institution.

SLT's Board of Directors is working hard to develop a wide array of strategies that support these goals and is on track to complete the plan by the end of May. If you have comments, thoughts or ideas please share them with us.



## Kirchner Woods

Since April 2009 when Kirchner Woods was purchased, Stowe Land Trust has tackled one project after another to make this property a community resource capable of standing the test of time. The parking area and trails are complete and look as if they belong. Your patience with the lack of signage was appreciated last fall and winter as we worked to inventory sign needs and come up with a design. The signs are currently being fabricated and trail markers will be ready for installation by volunteers on National Trails Day - June 4th.

At the same time we are working with Sally Stetson, who has generously donated her time, to design a trail map for Kirchner Woods. A

final draft should hit the printing press next month. The trail map will be available online and at the trailhead kiosk.

Before Stowe Land Trust took ownership of the 75 acre property, a management plan was developed to guide resource management and the construction of trails and related amenities. With so much accomplished since adopting the management plan, we will work to update the document this summer with the help of interns from UVM.

UVM's LANDS interns are students with experience or a focus on natural resources, supervised by graduate students from UVM's Field Naturalist program. SLT submitted a proposal this winter to have the group of students complete inventories and assessments for exotic invasive plants and wildlife habitat. With these two assessments completed we will be able to incorporate activities into the management plan to support permanent protection of Kirchner Woods.

## Wiessner Woods

2012 will mark the 20th anniversary of conservation for Wiessner Woods. In preparation for this milestone we will replace some of the older signs that are showing wear (or teeth marks from porcupines) and install a

few new signs in some of the more confusing spots on the trail.

Future phases of trail work are also planned to improve trail conditions on the property. We will prioritize areas that need work this year so staff and volunteers can work together on important trail projects to celebrate the 20th anniversary.

During National Trails Day on June 4th this year, volunteers will help spruce up the trails for the summer hiking season as well as replace the colored trail blazes that help mark the way in winter.

## Mill Trail

The historic Moravian Cabin continues to be a priority for Stowe Land Trust. Using recommendations made by Cushman Design Group last year, we submitted a proposal for funding to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. If awarded funds will support restoration efforts that will allow us to open the Moravian Cabin to the public.

Another grant proposal was submitted to the Recreation Trails Grant Program to provide funding for substantial trail work on the trail from the Moravian Cabin to Bingham Falls. If awarded, we will work with a professional trail builder and volunteers to improve drainage along nearly a mile of the trail late this summer or fall.

### Conservation Stewards: Fun Outdoor Volunteering!

Annual monitoring of conserved lands takes you to the fringes of spectacular protected properties. Volunteers also play an integral role in achieving SLT's goal of ensuring the long term integrity of its conserved lands.

### Volunteer Steward Training Saturday, May 21st 9am - 1:30pm

Training in the field with State Lands Forester Dave Wilcox will teach you about observing and interpreting changes in the forest. Training will also include a presentation about SLT's Stewardship Program and skills for finding parcel boundaries.

Please contact Becca Washburn at 802.253.7221 or [becca@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:becca@stowelandtrust.org)



We are looking for volunteers to monitor these conserved lands:

- Wiessner Woods - 79 acres
- Page Forest (Sterling Valley) - 99 acres
- Sunset Rock - 23 acres
- Nichols Field - 37 acres
- Moscow Ballfield - 4.7 acres

### Volunteer Trail Workday National Trails Day Saturday June 4th

Join SLT staff and volunteers at Wiessner Woods and Kirchner Woods as we spruce up the trails for the hiking season.

Volunteers will be clearing trails and bridges of winter debris, installing trail markers and new trail signs.

If you are interested in participating, please contact SLT at 802.253.7221 or [info@stowelandtrust.org](mailto:info@stowelandtrust.org) for details.



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SLT's New **klean**  **kanteen**®

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