

Mountain Views

News from Stowe Land Trust

Fall/Winter 2020

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Caring for your Favorite Places

Our Donors

New Directors



More than 250 volunteers from local businesses and schools and professionals have pulled thousands of non-native, invasive barberry plants at Cady Hill Forest since 2015 in an effort to restore native plant diversity to the property.

CARING FOR YOUR FAVORITE PLACES: *Protecting Forest & Human Health at Cady Hill*

By Kristen Sharpless, Executive Director

On a walk around Cady Hill Forest in early October, I was delighted to encounter flocks of songbirds busily pecking for insects, stunning fall colors on full display, and several mountain bikers enjoying the leaf-carpeted trails.

But what was most striking was what was missing.

The thousands of invasive, Japanese barberry plants that had carpeted portions of the forest several years ago were gone. In their place were riots of white pine seedlings, thickets of blackberry, and scattered native tree seedlings and other plants. I found one lone, small, barberry plant along the Bridgely trail. It was a magical moment, and one I was not sure I would ever experience when we set out on an ambitious effort to get the barberry infestation on the property under control in 2015.

Cady Hill Forest was purchased and conserved by Stowe Land Trust (SLT) in 2012, allowing for the expansion of the existing 60-acre Macutchan Town Forest by 258 acres. Now owned by the Town of Stowe and best known for its world-class, multi-use and mountain biking trail network maintained by the Stowe Trails Partnership, Cady Hill Forest is still at its heart just that: a forest. During early monitoring visits and assessments, SLT staff noticed that an extensive infestation of Japanese barberry covering about 36 acres was spreading from the powerline corridor that runs through the property into Cady Hill's forest.

Barberry is a non-native, invasive plant that looks pretty in landscaping around homes and businesses. But it wreaks havoc when it escapes into natural areas, posing a threat to forest health, wildlife, and human health and safety.

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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.

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STOWE LAND TRUST

Letter from the Executive Director



At Stowe Land Trust, we have been hearing from you that during the COVID-19 pandemic, our beautiful landscape, accessible trails, and local farms have never been more essential to your Stowe experience. How wonderful that while much of our daily life is altered and constrained, nature remains open.

The pandemic is presenting us all with an opportunity to feel how the land itself is part of the community to which we belong – even if right now you are away and eagerly waiting for the time you can return. As more people than ever are getting outside, we are finding a renewed appreciation for the gifts land gives us: fresh air, water and food; inspiring vistas; a feeling of peace and hope amid turmoil and uncertainty; safe places to exercise our bodies, calm our minds, and connect with our friends and family; and a closeness to wild things that continue to move with the reassuring rhythm of the changing seasons.

You have entrusted Stowe Land Trust with the responsibility of being an intelligent guardian and caretaker of your favorite conserved lands. We take this stewardship obligation seriously and can only meet it with the ongoing engagement and support from you – our community. Making a donation to Stowe Land Trust, becoming a member, volunteering your time, recreating responsibly, learning how to treat the land with love and respect are all essential investments we count on you to make part of your regular habits and routines. Thank you for doing so, and please invite others – especially newcomers – to join you.

With gratitude,

Kristen Sharpless
Executive Director

Show Your Support!

Check out our online shop for new limited-edition merchandise or some old favorites available for curbside pickup or shipping! These tees are available to order online and feature a hand-drawn image of the iconic Grandview Farm in Stowe Hollow by local designer Hannah Dreissigacker. This tee is the definition of soft and will be a favorite for years to come! Available in ladies and mens sizes in heather grey and dark heather grey. Give us a call at (802) 253-7221 to order or visit www.stowelandtrust.org/support/slt-shop.



Caring for Your Favorite Places *continued*

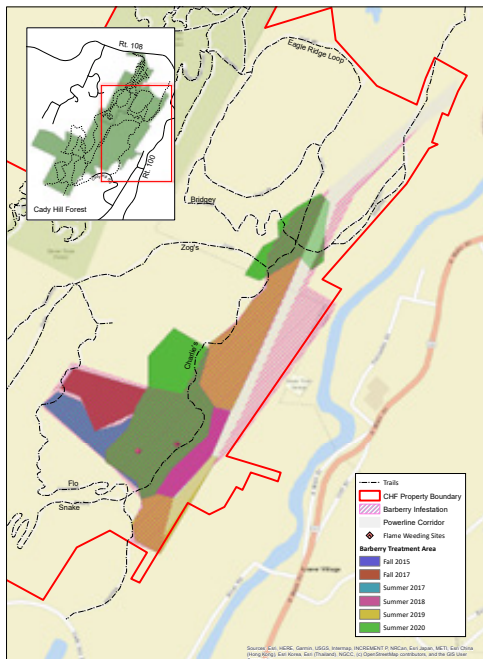


Invasive Japanese barberry is often spread by birds who are attracted to the bright, red berries.

Birds and other animals eat barberry's bright red berries, carrying the seeds into shrublands and forests. Once established, barberry can multiply and spread through seeds and stem and root sprouts, quickly colonizing an area. It can grow so thickly in woodlands that few native plants survive. Barberry infestations can also lead to increases in rates of Lyme disease. Ticks like to hang out on the tips of shrubs, waiting for mammals to pass by. Mice populations — an alternate host for Lyme disease — thrive in the thorny Barberry stands.

In 2015, Stowe Land Trust and the Stowe Conservation Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the management of Cady Hill Forest, decided to take a stand against barberry on the property. Over the past five years, we have systematically treated approximately 20 acres of the infested area by hand-pulling more than 10,000 plants — a much more time and labor-intensive approach than spraying with herbicides. About half of this area has been re-treated to remove new sprouts and give native trees and plants a chance to reestablish.

The work to pull the plants is hard and not nearly as much fun as planting trees or building trail bridges. Yet, more than 250 volunteers from local businesses and schools, and professionals from Intervale Conservation Nursery, Got Weeds?, and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation put their backs and hearts into yanking up these prickly plants over 15 work days held between 2015 and 2020. The Conservation Commission and Patagonia through AJ's Ski and Sports have invested more than \$10,000 over multiple years to support the ongoing effort.



Map of the barberry infestation and treated areas at Cady Hill Forest.

Starting to chip away at the barberry infestation in 2015 proved to be fortuitous timing when a major windstorm toppled nearly a third of Cady Hill Forest in October 2017. The openings created in the forest canopy by the windstorm brought more sunlight to the forest floor and would have given the barberry an even greater leg up. Instead, treated and re-treated areas are now sprouting native white pine, red maple, and American beech seedlings that will be the next generation of Cady Hill's forest — one that we hope will be diverse and resilient to ongoing stresses and impacts from forest pests and pathogens, climate change, deer browse, intensive recreational use and more. And one that will be less hospitable to deer ticks, reducing the risk of trail users being exposed to Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. It is a beautiful sight to behold.

Despite our successes so far, the work of controlling barberry and promoting native plant diversity and forest health at Cady Hill is far from over. Keeping the barberry from re-establishing from seeds spread from mature plants remaining in the powerline corridor and those still in landscaping around town will be an ongoing challenge. Ideally, we will find a feasible way to remove those seed sources from the property and our community in partnership with local landowners and others.

A Recipe for Stewardship Success

Looking back, we weren't sure our efforts and investments would pay off to the extent that or as soon as they have; the prospect of removing acres of barberry without the use of herbicides was daunting to the point of doubting whether it was even worth starting. However, we had conviction that it was the right thing to do for the health of our forest and community; commitment to do the work using best known practices and in stages over multiple years; a strong partnership; and lots of community support and help. Together, these elements created a special recipe for land stewardship success — one that we hope and seek to replicate again and again on our conserved lands and in our community.

Wondering what stewardship looks like on your other favorite conserved lands? See Page 11 for additional information updates.



Native trees and plants regenerating where barberry once grew.

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10 Miler

Grants

Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust
Land Trust Alliance
Oakland Foundation
Outdoor Gear Exchange
Patagonia & AJ's Ski & Sports
Spruce Peak Realty
Town of Stowe
Vail Resort EpicPromise Program

Hotel Partners

The Stowehof
Topnotch Resort & Spa
Trapp Family Lodge

Matching Gifts

ALG Matching Grants Program
Champlain Investment Partners
FM Global Foundation
IBM Corporation
Keurig Dr Pepper
Nuance Foundation, Inc.
The Walt Disney Company Foundation
UBS
Patagonia
Pepsico Foundation
The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation

In Kind Gifts & Donations

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Amazon Smile
Anna Black, Esq.
Dave Couch Signs
Ecopixel
Edelweiss Mountain Deli
Edward Jones – Caren Merson
Image Outfitters
In Company Clothing
Jesse Goldfine, Esq.
KellyCanVT
Lucy Nersesian
Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm
Netdahe Stoddard
Power Shift
Topnotch Resort & Spa
Vail Resort
Vermont Arborists

Program Partners

Stowe Conservation Commission
Stowe Elementary School
Stowe Trails Partnership
The Intervale Conservation Nursery
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
Vermont Land Trust
VT Department of Fish & Wildlife
VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
Waterbury Conservation Commission
Waterbury Land Initiative

This list includes all donations made between October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020. If we have missed or incorrectly listed your name, please let us know!

- 🏠 = 5+ Year Donors
- 🌲 = 10+ Year Donors
- 🏠 = 15+ Year Donors
- 📷 = 20+ Year Donors
- ▲ = 25+ Year Donors
- ❄️ = 30+ Year Donors



21st Annual Golf Tournament

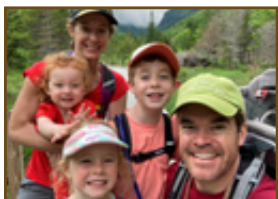
The 21st annual golf tournament was held on August 6, 2020 and raised \$27,000 for Stowe Land Trust. All the proceeds from this Legacy event will be added to SLT's stewardship endowment for the long-term care of all SLT's conserved lands. Thank you to our hosts, **Alice and Lee Spencer**, as well as all our sponsors and participants. Your support makes our work possible! For a complete list of tournament results, individuals and businesses that supported the tournament, as well as more photos from the event, please visit our website at www.stowelandtrust.org/news

Welcome New Board Members



Jess Laporte

Jess Laporte is a Haitian-Canadian-Vermonters who has recently returned to Vermont after six years of living, learning and working in Haiti. Jess grew up in Stowe and spent her childhood enjoying the outdoors with her big family, developing a deep connection to the outdoors. From the Green Mountains of Vermont to the beaches of Haiti, her favorite place to be is outside. In her career, Jess has worked at the intersection of Community Health and Social Enterprise, leveraging market-based models to provide customer driven social services. In Haiti she began in the clean water sector, transitioned to women's health in the garment industry, and dedicated 2.5 years to the evolution of SOIL's ecological sanitation service. Back in Vermont she is engaging in community health through the local Food System.



Jason Slocum and family

Jason Slocum has been a part-time resident of Stowe for the past 10 years. He is an active and enthusiastic user of SLT's properties in all seasons, and enjoys exploring the woods, mountains, and streams of Stowe with his wife, Callie, and their three young children. As a long-time SLT member and supporter, Jason appreciates the preservation and stewardship work that SLT has done over the years to create the trail network in town and looks forward to continuing to advance SLT's mission as a board member. His passion for land conservation and outdoor recreation extends to his hometown in Massachusetts, where he serves on the Corporate Board and Charles River Valley management committee for the Trustees of Reservations. When not in the woods, Jason is a Partner at Bain & Co. in Boston.



Tom Sweet

Tom Sweet grew up in Waterbury Center. Tom and his family returned to Waterbury Center in 1979 from a US Forest Service position in Minnesota and Michigan to assume the responsibility of the General Manager of Ward Lumber Company, a private industrial forest landowner. Tom and his son Dan established Hunger Mountain Forestry, Inc. a private forestry consulting firm in 1995. Many of his forest landowner clients are in the Stowe and Waterbury area. Tom and his wife Grace, a retired teacher, actively manage the family farm on Loomis Hill in Waterbury Center by producing hay for many horse lovers. Tom is interested in working with members of Stowe Land Trust on stewardship issues.

Bidding a Fond Farewell to Board Member Jed Lipsky

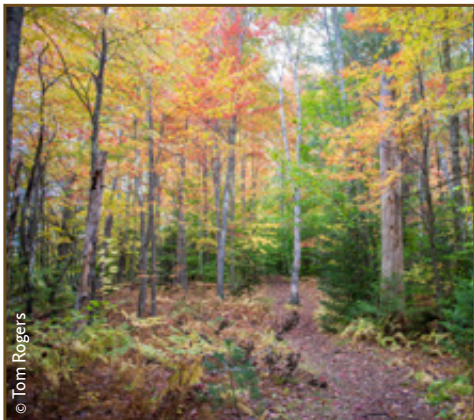


Jed Lipsky

We have been fortunate to have had **Jed Lipsky** as a member of the Stowe Land Trust Board of Directors for the last nine years. Jed joined the Board in 2012 just as the organization was embarking upon its largest conversation project to-date: Cady Hill Forest. Jed's experience and knowledge in land use planning, forestry and his common sense made him an invaluable addition to SLT. Jed's 40 years of experience as a professional logger was especially appreciated during the extensive clean-up efforts in Cady Hill Forest after the October 30, 2017 windstorm to get the trails cleared, repaired, and back open to the public. Thank you, Jed. We wish you well in all your future endeavors!

Thank You Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust!

Canadian families who call Stowe their home-away-from-home contributed \$31,000 USD to support Stowe Land Trust's land protection and stewardship work in 2020, including a contribution to the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor – an internationally-important network of connected forest habitats that extends up into Quebec and other parts of the Acadian region of Canada (page 10).



© Tom Rogers

To learn more about Canadian Friends of Stowe Land Trust and how to make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit www.stowelandtrust.org/support/canadian-friends/

To all of our Canadian friends: We miss you and look forward to when we can welcome you back to the Stowe community once the borders reopen. Thank you for your support!

Clifford Borden
Carole Burnham
Alvin Fagen
Dr. and Mrs. A. Felgar
The Grover Family Foundation
Richard and Susan Hart
Rona Klein
Sam Landsman & Joanne Borden
Lillian and Billy Mauer
Marvin and Rhoda Rosenbloom Family Foundation
Barbara Segal & Howard Brown
Lloyd and Janice Sheiner
Jon Sigler & Kathy Myron
George and Shelley Stern
Bob and Joanne Wordham
Stephen Yanow & Linda Hazen

Protecting the Land You Love

Conserving the Valcour Farm in Morristown: SLT Fundraising Goal Met!

Thanks to your support, Stowe Land Trust raised \$10,205* to help the Vermont Land Trust permanently protect the 173-acre Valcour Farm on the corner of Randolph and Goeltz Roads in Morristown. Once conserved, the farm will be kept affordable for the next generation of farmers and sold at its agricultural value to local farmer, Jesse Hursh. Thank you for your investment in local farms and farming! Thank you to the following donors for contributing to this important effort.

Friends of Stowe Land Trust (4)
Pete Adamy & Patricia Flam
Jane and Stephen Alpert
Gary and Nancy Banks
Raymond and Sengdao Bergmann
Betty and Carvel Bevans Jr.
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Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli
Kyle and Laura Walker
Richard and Sally Watts
Roger M. and Jill J. Witten

In Memory of David Sequist, D.V.M

Charlie and Gibby Berry

**Funds raised over the \$10,000 goal will be set aside in a restricted fund for future Stowe Land Trust land protection projects.*



Valcour Farm

Blauvelt Forest Conserved!

In June 2020, 111 additional acres of forestland were protected in the **Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor**. This corridor lies along the Stowe-Waterbury town line between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range and is one of the most important regions for wildlife movement in Vermont. Whitney Blauvelt, whose family has been long-time owners of the property, sold a conservation easement on his property far below appraised value to the Vermont Land Trust.

The protection of the Blauvelt parcel adds to the over 450 acres in this corridor that have been conserved since 2018 by the Shutesville Wildlife Corridor Partnership. The partnership consists of the Waterbury Conservation Commission, Stowe Conservation Commission, Stowe Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, Vermont Agency of Transportation, two regional planning commissions, and many community volunteers.



Blauvelt Forest

Outings & Events

Stay up to date with our free events and outings by following us on Instagram and Facebook, and checking the events section of our website: stowelandtrust.org/events.

Other Updates

Community Survey: Thank you for your input!

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback with Stowe Land Trust through our community survey this summer! We always love hearing from you and if you missed the survey, please email us your thoughts to info@stowelandtrust.org. A very special thanks to Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm for donating three half-gallon jugs of their delicious maple syrup to our contest. Congratulations to our three lucky winners: Julie Jatlow, Adam Carlise, and Sally Bindari!

A Spotlight on Stewardship

Our Commitment to Care for Conserved Lands

When we permanently protect land at Stowe Land Trust (SLT), you know we are in it for the long haul. Through our Stewardship Program, we fulfill our commitment to be responsible and intelligent guardians of the land entrusted to our care. Now and always.

This work is not simple. Nor is it always easy. No two of SLT's 34 protected properties are the same. They range in size from 5 to over 1000 acres. Each has a different mix of conservation values from farmland to public trails to wildlife habitat and more. Their ownership and management structures are varied; some remain in private ownership, others become public town or state lands, and others are owned by SLT. Permitted and restricted uses, histories, and possibilities are different for each one.

Stewardship Updates

2019 Halloween Storm Repairs

The rain we received on October 31, 2019 damaged trails at a number of our properties. At **Kirchner Woods**, storm debris backed up under a low bridge, sending water down the trail and eroding the entrance to the trail network. Over the summer staff cleared out the trapped debris to allow water to flow through the stream channel again and then moved gravel by the bucket and wheelbarrow full to patch the eroded areas.



New culvert at the Mill Trail

The parking lot at the **Mill Trail** fared worse when a 40+ year old culvert clogged with sediment and the small stream which is supposed to run under the parking lot suddenly ran over it instead. In June 2020, Stowe Land Trust hired Percy, Inc. to upgrade and replace the culvert to be

ready for future storms. They also installed new posts at the end of the parking lot to improve the access gate on the property.

Recreation Improvements

Education materials at **DuMont Meadow** received a face lift this year thanks to grant funding from the Oakland Foundation. A new trail map and brochure for the property is now available at the Stowe Land Trust office and the trailhead kiosk, and the interpretive signs in the meadow have been re-printed on durable material.



All that means things can get complicated in a hurry.

But not to worry. SLT's Stewardship Program and staff have the skills, expertise, and systems in place to handle these complexities and give each property the personal attention and unique consideration it requires. As the climate and ecological conditions change, our community evolves, and unanticipated opportunities and challenges arise, we are there to keep an eye on things, make informed decisions, and step in when needed to make sure that the land is still healthy and beautiful for the next generation to enjoy. By growing and responsibly managing our Stewardship Endowment, we are also committed to making sure we have the financial resources to do this important work even during times of economic uncertainty or crisis.



Ron Stancliff and his son, Chris, with the new dock at Joe's Pond.

Joe's Pond, a hidden gem in Morristown, had a dock installed at the boat launch this fall thanks to the Outdoor Gear Exchange Charitable Grant Fund. Adding a dock will reduce human impact on the sensitive shoreline at Joe's Pond and compliment the improved trail network that landowner Ron Stancliff built this spring.

Wood rots, and trail structures are no exception. A major overhaul of the bridge at the entrance to **Wiessner Woods** was finally called for this spring. The old decking was removed and replaced with hemlock boards from a local lumberyard creating a safe, stable platform for visitors to cross.



Old bridge at Wiessner Woods



New bridge!

Join or Renew Your Membership Today!



Thank you for the long-term investments you and every SLT supporter have made in protecting and caring for the Stowe area's farm, forest, and recreation lands.

Never before has the beautiful landscape, accessible trails, and local farms been more important to our community.

Renew your membership today at www.stowelandtrust.org.

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