

Mountain Views

FALL/WINTER 2024

News from
**STOWE
LAND TRUST**

Let's Connect Stowe!

Trail connectivity? Wildlife habitat? Flood resilience?

Learn why protecting the Adams Camp Connector has broad support from recreationists, conservationists, and town officials



Let's Connect Stowe!

Wiessner Woods. Sunset Rock. Cady Hill. Bingham Falls. Pinnacle Meadow. These iconic places are so central to our identity, so much at the core of who we are, that I truly cannot imagine what Stowe would be without them.

Thanks to you, these iconic places will forever remain a part of Stowe's identity.

And right now, the next iconic place in Stowe is in need of protecting. In fact, you could say that this is the place that ties many of Stowe's other iconic places together.

But there is a catch. We have a particularly tight deadline on this one—we must come together to raise the funds and close on this project by the end of 2024.

Read on to learn about the Adams Camp Connector and the many ways it will benefit our community. From permanently protecting a critical linkage point between existing trail networks, to helping our community be flood resilient, to protecting valuable habitat for wildlife, this effort could not be more important.

I invite you to consider making a gift of support. And please help spread the word about the Adams Camp Connector. It will take a grassroots, community-wide effort to save this critical linkage that will help shape Stowe's identity, now and forever.



Tom Rogers
Executive Director

A man in a grey waders and a red and white cap is fly fishing in a river. The river flows over rocks, creating white water rapids. The surrounding forest is lush with green and yellow autumn leaves. The text 'connect to something more' is overlaid in a large, white, sans-serif font, framed by a yellow bracket-like shape.

connect
to something
more

Stowe resident Drew Clymer casts his fly rod on the West Branch of the Little River along the Adams Camp Connector parcel.

Conservation, Collaboration & Connection

The Adams Camp Connector reflects diverse community values and has broad support from recreation enthusiasts, conservationists, and town planning officials.

What if there was a piece of land that allowed Stowe to connect trails in Adams Camp to the Rec Path, improving access and adding immense value to our already incredible trail systems?

What if that piece of land was also considered high-priority by conservationists looking at the big picture of flood resilience, wildlife habitat, and Vermont's overall ecological integrity?

And, what if that parcel contained an operating sugarbush run by one of Stowe's beloved farm families who are selling the conservation easement at less than appraised value?

Would you chip in to help protect that piece of land?

The Adams Camp Connector parcel represents the missing link for a recreational connector trail between Adams Camp and the Stowe Rec Path. These 85 acres are the last piece of the puzzle that would create an uninterrupted trail network from the summit of Mt. Mansfield to the village of Stowe. And we have an opportunity to protect it now.

The wide ranging benefits of conserving this piece of land has garnered broad support from:

- Stowe Land Trust
- Stowe Trails Partnership
- Catamount Trail Association
- Stowe Nordic
- The Lamoille County Planning Commission
- The Stowe Selectboard
- The Stowe Conservation Commission

But, even with the support of town government and local nonprofits, conservation does not just magically happen. This opportunity comes with a price tag, and a deadline. That's where you, our community members, donors, and supporters come in.



Tom Rogers, executive director of Stowe Land Trust, and Carolyn Lawrence, executive director of Stowe Trails partnership are among those in support of conserving the Adams Camp Connector.

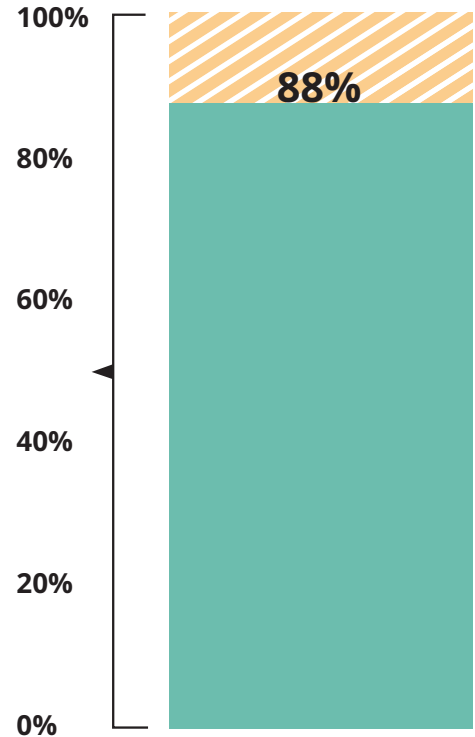
Stowe Land Trust is responsible for securing \$820,000 by December 2024. The chance to protect this critical piece of land came about from a court ruling that gave us until the end of the year to close this deal. Simply put, this is a one-of-a-kind opportunity that will need the support of the entire community to get over that finish line before the clock strikes midnight.



Let's Connect Stowe!

The clock is ticking, and we must raise \$95,000 by December 2024 to reach our total goal of \$820,000 to close the deal.

Please donate to the Adams Camp Connector today! stowelandtrust.org



Stowe has three excellent trail networks—Cady Hill, Adams Camp, and Sterling Forest—and a lot of demand from the public to establish better connections between them. This represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Carolyn Lawrence, executive director,
Stowe Trails Partnership



Adams Camp Connector parcel across from the Topnotch events field.

Property boundaries are approximate and provided for illustration purposes only.

Stowe Local, Larry Lackey: “We can’t take open land for granted.”

A lifelong resident of Stowe, Larry Lackey says his goal is to “support every project” that helps conserve the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor, a large tract of land connecting the Worcester Range to the Green Mountains.

“I see it as a long-term project,” he said. “There is an ecological importance to keeping that corridor connected. We can’t take for granted that these parcels of land will remain undeveloped forever.”

Larry and his wife, Peg, contributed in 2023 to the purchase and permanent protection of Shutesville Ledges, a forested 86-acre parcel in the heart of the corridor. They also support the Stowe Land Trust with an annual donation. “I like what they are doing,” Larry said. “I want to enable their work and recognize the ongoing need to support staff. It can’t just be contributions to projects.”

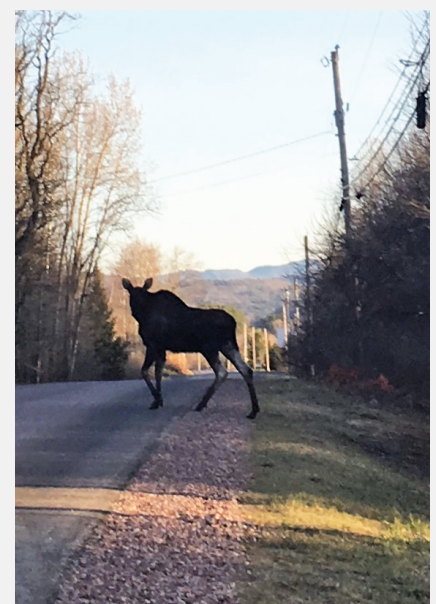
Avid bikers, Larry and Peg enjoy touring Vermont’s remote backroads. “You still come across these huge pieces of land that are undeveloped,” Larry said. “Stowe used to feel like that, like a park with plenty of privately-owned open spaces. Now, we need to plan for public access and conserving land.”

“Some people are motivated to protect what they see, others like the idea that the land trust has a strategic conservation plan for Stowe. I guess I’m a little bit of both. I love walking in the woods, seeing the wildflowers, and hearing birds singing. And I like the idea of protecting land so that we can coexist with wildlife.”

Larry Lackey



*Shutesville Ledges within the
Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.*





“Brazen Bears Rattle Stowe”

That was the headline in the Stowe Reporter this summer, accompanied by a photo of a bear on someone’s back deck.

Many of us have become accustomed to seeing bears in our yards and around town. And that’s not always a good thing. While they are awe-inspiring animals to behold, they belong in the wild.

What can we do?

It is critical that we continue to protect areas of high-value habitat to keep wildlife in the wild. The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife estimates there are 4,500 to 6,000 black bears living in Vermont, concentrated along the spine of the Green Mountains. Protecting their forest habitat, including the important Adams Camp Connector, will allow bears and other wild animals to find food and shelter in the woods rather than in our back yards.





PHOTO: STOWE DERBY / MT. MANSFIELD ACADEMY

Protecting a Cherished Stowe Tradition

If the Adams Camp Connector project is successful, the Stowe Derby's race route through a currently unprotected parcel would be enshrined.

Eighty years ago this winter, two of Stowe's most infamous skiers, Sepp Ruschp and Erling Strom, placed a bet.

Ruschp, an Austrian and the head of Stowe's new ski school, believed alpine skis were the best way to ski from the top of Mt. Mansfield to the village of Stowe. Strom, a world-famous mountaineer from Norway, argued cross-country skis were the better choice. The race was on.

This winter, eight decades later, generations of skiers from around the world will gather atop Mt. Mansfield to retrace their route in one of Stowe's most iconic events, the Stowe Derby.

The "spirit and heart" of Stowe

Few would disagree that the town has changed in 80 years. For Brooke Mitchell, an avid skier and former organizer of the Stowe Derby, the pace of that change makes it all the more important to hold onto our cherished traditions.

"The Derby is part of what makes Stowe, Stowe," she said. "The spirit and heart has remained the same since that first bet was placed—it's a really important part of our community."

Stowe Land Trust's own Metzti Anderson has been skiing the Derby since high school. She agrees it's a tradition worth holding onto. "It's the most exhilarating and terrifying thing to go down the Toll Road on cross country skis," she said. "But everyone is in it together and you feel like you've really accomplished something when you make it down in one piece—when you actually get to the church and look back at the mountain."

"There's nothing like it," said Mitchell, who skied the Derby with her son, Alex, a member of the Stowe High School cross country ski team, last year. "It's fun. It's hard. Riding up the chair lift in skinny skis is just funny, and that sets the whole tone."

From private to protected

The Adams Camp Connector project would allow the section of the Catamount Trail that runs behind the Covered Bridge Condominiums on unprotected land to be moved to a permanently protected parcel. While landowners have historically agreed to allow the Derby course to pass through their property, the agreement is revisited annually with no guarantee access will be granted one year to the next.

"Protecting the land is one big step we can take to help the Derby tradition continue," Anderson said.



PHOTO: STOWE DERBY / MT. MANSFIELD ACADEMY

“

The work of Stowe Land Trust is so critical to protecting the parts of Stowe that we all love—the greenery, the clean air, the wildlife, the trails. I'm on these trails almost every day, whether on skis, on a bike, or in my sneakers. Can you imagine if the land trust hadn't conserved the land they already have—where would we be now?"

Brooke Mitchell



Meet Nicole Corriveau, VHCB AmeriCorps Land and Trails Steward

A 2022 graduate of the University of New England, Nicole Corriveau is serving with VHCB AmeriCorps at Stowe Land Trust.

What have you enjoyed most about your work with Stowe Land Trust?

I really like trail and stewardship-related work. The first thing I dove into last fall was trail maintenance, which involved a lot of volunteer coordination. I also enjoy conservation easement monitoring. Stowe Land Trust is responsible for stewarding properties they own or have a conservation easement on in perpetuity, so I look for invasives or walk the property boundary to locate pins. It's really different from being out for a hike for exercise where I just zoom by everything.



Has anything changed for you going from an academic setting into the field?

When I thought about forest management in school, I thought a hands-off approach was probably best. Getting to meet county foresters and land managers, they say, "Hey, you have to get out there and learn about your property." Turns out there's a lot that private landowners can do—whether that's learning about invasives, managing forests for wildlife habitat, or building trails.

What do you want people to know about Stowe Land Trust?

The land trust's work is really boosted and upheld by donors and volunteers. Whether it's a group that gets a riparian area planted or the individuals who are out on the trails regularly. It's so important. Publicly, a lot of what people see is fundraising to protect land, but it's after the ribbon cutting that the bulk of the stewardship work begins. That can often go under the radar.

What has been a highlight of your first year of service at Stowe Land Trust?

Finishing trail upgrades to the Kirchner Woods network that make trails currently open for bikes available for adaptive bike use is something I'm especially pumped about—it's going to make the outdoors more accessible and fun for everyone. Overall, I'm stoked to keep making a difference, learn new things, and be part of a team that's all about protecting and enjoying our natural spaces.

Anything else we should know?

Anyone can steward the land! The first step is just getting out there.





Above: Suzanne and her daughter, Molly, at the top of Haulapalooza. Below: A few of the wonderful volunteers who help us steward the land.

Suzanne Danzig is Volunteer of the Year!

A part-time resident of Stowe for over 30 years, Suzanne has been a member of Stowe Land Trust for nearly as long. In addition, she serves as a volunteer land steward for Crawford Forest and, with her husband Stan, was among the first donors to our “Let’s Connect Stowe!” campaign.

“

The Adams Camp Connector parcel is so important because it’s the final piece that connects the Mt. Mansfield area and Adams Camp to the Rec Path. It’s pretty special to be able to walk out the door and be on the Catamount Trail. I don’t take that for granted. When you drive up the Mountain Road, there is virtually nothing up there on the south side of the road past Luce Hill. It’s all green.”

Suzanne Danzig



STOWE LAND TRUST

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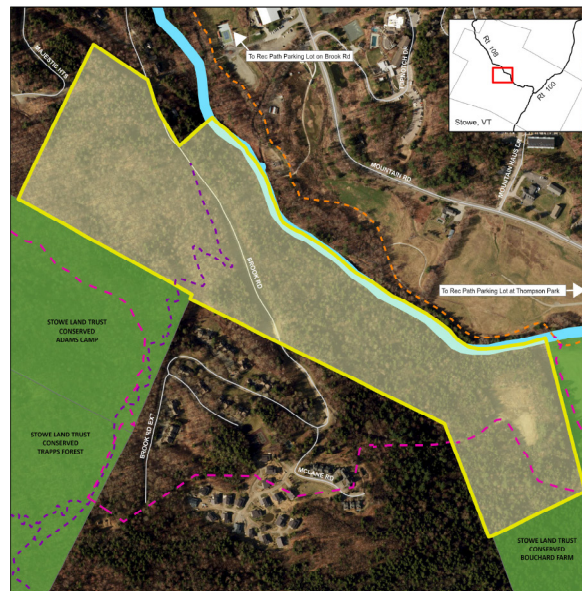


Let's Connect Stowe ADAMS CAMP CONNECTOR



This is one of those rare opportunities to conserve a piece of land that reflects diverse community values. It's the epitome of great conservation."

Tom Rogers, executive director,
 Stowe Land Trust



Adams Camp Connector Land Protection Project

85.4 Acres | Property of Mr. Paul Percy

Legend	
	Proposed Conservation Easement Area
	Catamount Trail
	Stowe Rec Path
	Stowe Trails Partnership Trails
	West Branch of the Little River
	Local Roads
	Stowe Land Trust Conserved Lands

Visit stowelandtrust.org/events for our full calendar!

Join or donate today! stowelandtrust.org/donate



Looking for last year's member list? The number of supporters has outgrown the newsletter! Scan this QR code to view a list of 2024 supporters and partners.