UPPER SACO VALLEY LAND TRUST







Preserving Land for Community Benefit

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is a nonprofit organization working with local landowners to permanently protect the lands and waters that define our communities and enrich our quality of life.

USVLT serves northern Carroll County in New Hampshire and western Oxford County in Maine.

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Art Celebrates Place is a cornerstorne of our conservation community. 2019 marked the ten-year anniversary of this annual event and springtime rite. To celebrate, all images in this annual report showcase artwork of the past few years. We deeply appreciate the generosity of the contributing artists. STAFF William Abbott Executive Director

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Jesse Wright Local Food Systems Advocate PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



This fall, USVLT will turn 20. With the approach of this milestone, we are taking stock of the work accomplished in the past 19 years. USVLT has now permanently conserved more than 12,000 acres of habitat, working forest, and prime farmland throughout the Mount Washington Valley of New

Hampshire and western Maine. As a watershed-based organization, we've also worked to safeguard drinking water aquifers and protected more than 16 miles of frontage along the Saco River and its tributaries. This track record is a remarkable success story: one of dedication and generosity on the part of countless landowners and supporters, all coalescing around a shared vision of the future.

On the cusp of our 20th birthday, we have reached out to several early land and conservation easement donors, original board members, and other community leaders who shared that bold and optimistic vision. Their reflections appear on pages 4 to 5.

Powerful partnerships with other area nonprofits defined 2019 as well. The new Redstone Preserve (see page 9 for more information) provides partnership opportunities with the Town of Conway, The Nature Conservancy, and also potentially, in a first for USVLT, with Habitat for Humanity. In conjunction with Tin Mountain Conservation Center, we continued our Easement Exploration Series, designed to connect supporters and community members with the lands that they have helped protect (see page 7). With the World Fellowship Center, we completed all fundraising necessary to conserve more than 400 acres of their campus.

2019 was also a year of planning for future land conservation initiatives. We are currently working on several projects throughout our 11-town service area that will cumulatively preserve more than 1500 acres of forests, prime agricultural soils, and lands protecting essential water resources. Thank you for your part in making this story complete, and for sharing our vision.

William Abbott, Executive Director

Doug Burnell, President

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Cover: Autumn Evening in Jackson/Lauren Sansaricq This page: View Across the Back Field/April Costa Fall Light on Trees II/Natalie Beittel

YEARS STRO FOCUS ON STEWARDSHIP

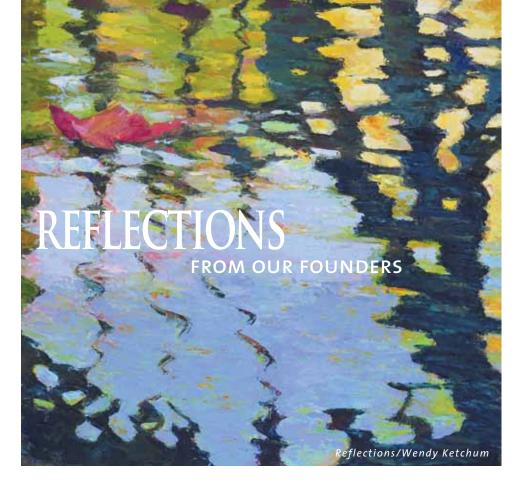
In 19 years, we've helped to preserve 12,000 acres, which is a lot of land to care for. A key element of our mission is to assure we have land "remaining in its natural state, benefiting natural and human communities," inferring management involving an intentional "light touch" with infrequent visits. But USVLT's mission statement also provides for the "well-being and availability of land for farming, forestry, recreation, and education." It is these multi-use properties that necessitate a proverbial rolling up of sleeves. Whether working with lessee farmers at the Albany Town Forest's fields behind Kennett Middle School, or developing interpretive signage that highlights the fascinating human history at the Leita Monroe Lucas Preserve in East Conway, USVLT is committed to these lands. They provide rich natural resources and educational opportunities, and are a worthy investment of our time, money and materials.

In 2019, USVLT established a Land Steward position to meet these opportunities head-on. Peter Howe (who was also our summer intern in 2018) accepted the job and hit the ground running in June. Throughout the summer, he worked with the Conservation Lands Manager to implement a transition of stewardship responsibilities. During the fall, Peter led the volunteer easementmonitoring program, all while planning for improvements at our "fee-owned" preserves, applying for funding for new trails, and wholly dedicating himself to upgrading Land Trust maps and signage.

Several USVLT properties are poised to demand an outsized portion of stewardship time and dollars, and they should. Chief among these is the Pine Hill Community Forest. (The Redstone Preserve, donated in 2019 by John Schiavi, also has a rich future—see page 9 for details.) With its network of trails, proximity to Kennett High School, and existing stakeholders including the Mount Washington Valley Trails Commission and the Mountain Meadow Riders snowmobile club, continuing the tradition of multiple use is essential.

In 2019, the Pine Hill Advisory Committee officially formed and started a collaborative planning process for the Community Forest. Comprised of representatives from Tin Mountain Conservation Center; the Conway School District, Conservation Commission, and Select Board; and the Land Trust, the committee serves as a voice for a wide constituency. In early 2019, it hired Recon Trail Design, and in the fall approved the conceptual trail master plan, which includes linkages to the Conway Rec Path, space for enhanced mountain biking trails, and better interface with the Kennett High School campus. USVLT staff has applied for funding to start turning these conceptual designs into reality. Stay tuned!





With the approach of our 20th anniversary, we asked several early supporters and volunteers to reflect on USVLT's collective work to preserve land for community benefit. Their thoughts are captured here. Please note that this group is just a small subset of the many community members that helped launch USVLT in late 2000; we remain indebted and thankful for every one of those early visionaries.

I grew up in a rural community, which is now a suburban housing development. That experience reinforced for me the need for land preservation. It hurts to see these special places disappear. I both live and work on protected land which is appreciated and used by many. From chestnut trees, to ski trails, deep forests to undeveloped lakes, we have the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust to thank for encouraging many to protect and preserve land for the betterment of all.

—Lori Jean Kinsey, Executive Director, Tin Mountain Conservation Center, and current owner of the Harding Easement

I am proud to be one of the original founding members of USVLT and grateful for the opportunity to work for the Land Trust for many years as its Land Protection Specialist. It was my dream job. With the continued generous support of our members and community foundations as well as the dedication of our Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, I see a bright future ahead for USVLT and local land conservation.

—Linda Comeau, founding Board member and long-time USVLT Land Protection Specialist

In 2007, Linda Comeau's expertise in guiding my husband, Farish, and me in our conservation easement process was instrumental in our overwhelming support for the mission of USVLT. We soon were involved with the new director, William Abbott, and found ourselves members of an extended family of like-minded conservation folk who met for the annual meetings and Art Celebrates Place; both events involving our Uplands Apple Farm at several points. At the time of my husband's death, it was the knowledge that, together, we had already made sure that our land would be protected into the future that brought comfort.

---Eleanor Jenkins, USVLT member, early conservation easement donor, and owner, Uplands Apple Farm

Being one of the early members of the Board of Directors of this organization, and then serving on the land and development committees (and even leading a few cance trips on the Saco), my involvement with USVLT has been very fulfilling. Through my position at NRCS, I have partnered with USVLT to secure farmland easements and encouraged landowners to donate easements and fee parcels. I think it is a very impressive organization that has grown tremendously, thanks to many people working together in harmony to make the world better. —Nels Liljedahl, former Board member

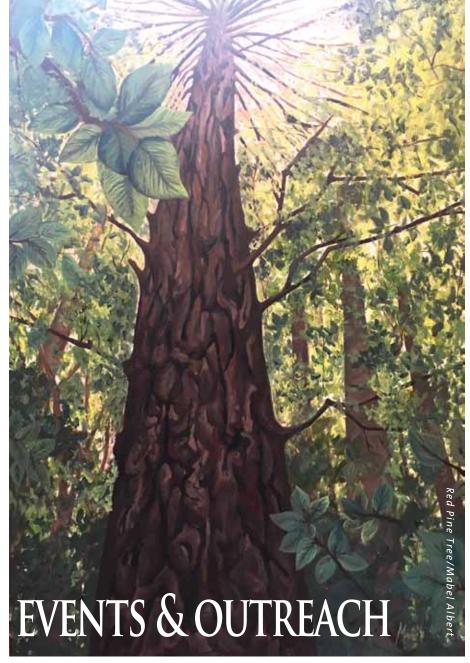
and Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist

When I think back on my twenty-year relationship with the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, with all of its great land protection work, growth and vision, what really strikes me is the quality of the people. Throughout the years, the board members, volunteers, staff, donors, land owners and other supporters all have shared a common vision and dedication to land conservation and protecting our special places for the future, and it does not get much better than that.

-Peter Benson, founding member and current USVLT Board member

The Land Trust was incredibly fortunate to have experienced volunteer board members from the outset. Tom Henderson, a Land Trust charter member, was also executive director of the Greater Lovell Land Trust. Another charter member, Linda Comeau, was fresh from a graduate degree in Natural Resource Management from Antioch New England. Peter Benson and Wink Lees, early Land Trust Board members, were working with the NH Nature Conservancy, and Linda Gray was a staff person for the NH Charitable Foundation. Their combined experience, together with a very keen local Board, was one of the Land Trust's major early successes.

—Tom Earle, USVLT long-time Board President, early easement donor, and owner, Earle Family Farm



Much of USVLT's work is opaque, time-consuming, and hard to translate. Negotiating easement terms, combing through title reports, and writing grants can tend towards the mundane. For our staff and dedicated volunteer Board of Directors, these quotidian tasks can feel far removed from the land we love, which is a key reason that outreach programming and events are so essential. These activities reinforce our mission of conserving land for community benefit and connect us directly to our committed supporters. Now in its seventh year, USVLT's Easement Exploration Series is designed to introduce the land we've helped conserve, both far-flung and close-at-hand. The Series features a wide array of landscapes and educational topics. In 2019, that included a tour of historical ski trails at the Ware Preserve in Intervale, an astronomical star-gazing event at World Fellowship Center, an exploration of fire ecology at the King-Hayes easement in Brownfield (complete with finding charcoal, burn scars, and other traces of Brownfield's devastating 1947 fire), and an "Impressions of Painters" history walk at the Leita Monroe Lucas preserve in East Conway, celebrating the legacy of two American Impressionists that once lived onsite, Thomas Wilmer Dewing and Maria Oakey Dewing.

2019 marked the 10th anniversary of Art Celebrates Place. Once again, the Pace Galleries and Leura Hill Eastman Performing Arts Center at Fryeburg Academy showcased local visual artists, dancers, singer-songwriters, and story tellers. This annual rite of spring, with its stellar display of talent, was the most successful, financially, in our history. We owe tremendous gratitude to the volunteers that drive this event, year after year, and also to those pioneers who first envisioned ACP and its potential impact: Marnie Cobbs, Linda Gray and Lucy Gatchell.

As Art Celebrates Place so perfectly celebrates spring's arrival, Fields on the Saco is the other seasonal bookend, marking the fall harvest. In 2019, the Land Trust hosted the event for the third year, and once again, the Valley's finest chefs and farms were on display at the Hardy Farm in Fryeburg. With a special focus on the farmers who have been directly helped by USVLT's land-conservation efforts, last year's fundraising goal was handily surpassed. We are extremely grateful to Sasha Tracy, who voluntarily shepherded this event from start to finish with grace.

If you haven't been, we'd love to see you at future events. They're the best way to get to know what we really do, and why we do it.





PARTNERSHIPS & special initiatives

It takes a village. Partnerships amplify the Land Trust's work, and chief among our partners are other environmental organizations that both conserve land and focus on education. Many Easement Exploration Series events, for example, partner with Tin Mountain Conservation Center (see page 6-7 for 2019 highlights). The Ware Preserve (a 2018 project) is stewarded with the help of Granite Backcountry Alliance. Community partners are planning the future of Pine Hill Community Forest (see page 2-3 for more), while other current land-protection projects will be completed only through the support of local and regional stakeholders, like The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land.

In 2019, a new partnership was seeded with Habitat for Humanity. As a land conservation organization, USVLT recognizes that it cannot work in a vacuum, isolated from other community issues. Critical among those concerns is the lack of affordable housing within our service area. In 2019, we received a donation of property from John Schiavi, the Redstone Preserve, which abuts historic Redstone Village (see box). While most of the land boasts excellent conservation values and natural resources, or provides a buffer to similar areas, some of it does not. A dialogue is underway with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity to explore whether a portion of the property is appropriate as a future site for affordable housing. While this relationship is in its initial stages, the Land Trust embraces the possibility of preserving land for community benefit in a new—and potentially profound—way.

Get to Know the Redstone Preserve

In August of 2019, USVLT received a three-parcel donation of 94 acres near historic Redstone Village from John Schiavi (Redstone Properties). The property has a history of multiple uses by bikers, hikers, neighborhood dog-walkers and snowmobilers (Corridor 19 crosses it). The land also abuts The Nature Conservancy's Green Hills Preserve, so permanent ownership by USVLT only made sense. The property is considered "Supporting Landscape" for the rare natural communities just upslope, and it includes portions of the historic Redstone Quarry. The donation also came with a generous stewardship-fund contribution toward the property's long-term management. Public access, historic assets, and natural resources make this property a true conservation gem, checking all the proverbial boxes. USVLT will partner with other area nonprofit groups for the parcel's ongoing management, to continue responsible public access onsite, and to shine a light on Redstone's fascinating history.

To access this preserve, park in the dirt lot behind Walmart at the end of Hemlock Lane, and then cross the railroad tracks. The Redstone Preserve is immediately east of Mountain Street and heads uphill toward Rattlesnake Mountain.

The Land Trust is also proud of its role in helping to create a new community nonprofit, the Saco Headwaters Alliance. Since 2015, USVLT has been increasingly concerned about both surface and groundwater quality. While traditional land conservation does address these issues (there is a direct correlation between water quality and the percentage of the watershed that remains forested), clearly there was a need to accelerate efforts to safeguard this critical resource. To this end, several area towns have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, aquifer protection ordinances, thanks to USVLT's outreach. Protecting water resources is complex and time intensive, and the need emerged for an organization to take this on as a core mission. Land Trust Board members Tom Gross, Anne Pillion, and Mark Dindorf (as well as several USVLT advocates) have now created the Saco Headwaters Alliance to make headway on this critical work. We look forward to future partnerships with SHA.



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Fish Nerds Guide Service Flatbread Pizza Foothills Farm Alliance Gay Freeborn Frith Farm Fryeburg Academy Lucy Gatchell Grandy Oats Linda Gray Green Thumb Farm Maria Gross Herb Hollingsworth Lindsay Johnston Allie Kaplan-Thompson Leura Hill Eastman Performing Arts Center Melanie Barash Levitt Jeanne Limmer Maine Medicinals Tricia Mattox-Larson Milan McNall Meghan Moody Molly Mundy Naylen Farm Old Village Bakery Patch Farm Pied-a-terre Farm Kristen Pobatschnig Jay Rancourt Saco River Brewing Saco River Farm

Sap Hound Maple Company Shaw's Supermarket Sherman Farm South Paw Farm Georgia Stafford Sunnyfield Brick Oven Bakery Tamworth Mushroom Company The Local Grocer Purlin Twigg-Smith Virginia Ward Aurora Winkler

FIELDS ON THE SACO IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

Anne Skidmore Photography Bryant Alden BAM Hospitality Michael Beers Ann Bennett Peter & Emily Benson Ailie Byers Cormack Construction Sarah & Jake Davis Andrew Drummond Dutch Bloemen Winkel (Carrie Scribner) Earle Family Farm Good Vibes Coffee Roasters Granite Backcountry Alliance Linda Gray Green Thumb Farms Hardy Farm

HEB Engineers Hosac Farm Jeff Fournier Jason Huter Liz Jackson Paula Jones Nicholas Kane Erik Koeppel Leone McDonnell & **Roberts PA** Julie Levine Libby's Bistro & SAaLT Pub Little Field Farm Lucy Hardware Maine Grains Tricia Mattox-Larson Mill Brook Farm Monhegan Wellness (Tobey Levine) Moonset Farm (Jackie Gardner) Mountain Heartbeet Farm Navlen Farm New Day Farm Old Wells Farm The Oxford House Inn Patch Farm Pietree Orchard Pork Hill Farm Portland Schooner Company Range View Farm **Red Gables Farm** Susan Ross-Parent Sap House Meadery **Richard Schmitt** Severance Lodge Club Ski The Whites Lisa Somerville Jonathan & Natalie Spak Spider Web Gardens Teresa Stearns Table and Tonic The Tarberry Company Thompson House Eatery Sasha Tracy The Trailing Yew Vintage Baking Company Weston's Farm White Mountain Cider Company White Mountain Puzzles Wildcat Inn & Tavern WMWV 93.5 Wotton Farm

GRANTS & SPECIAL Matching Gifts PROGRAM SUPPORT Advancing Local Agriculture Anonymous Anonymous family foundation Maine Farmland Trust State of NH Department of Agriculture Thompson House Eatery USDA – Rural Business Development Grant Aquifer Protection & Water **Quality Work** NH Department of Environmental Services -Local Source Water Protection Grant Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation **General Support** Anonymous family foundations (2) Land Trust Alliance Maine Community Foundation New Hampshire Charitable Foundation donor advised funds: Anonymous family funds (2) Eagle's Rest Fund Kigme Fund Kineo Fund Lakes Region Environmental Fund Marshall Family Fund Melinda Richmond Fund Richard A. Ware Family Fund Stanton and Elisabeth Davis Fund Newman's Own Foundation PayPal Giving Fund Stewardship Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Natural Resources Conservation Service - USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Grant New Hampshire Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) Redstone Properties, Inc. (John Schiavi)

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersev Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation **Dundee Project** Martha W. Chandler Kimberly Siebert & Mr. Hugh MacPhail Joan E. MacPhail Rev Trust of 2008 Lucy Brook Farm Anonymous Anonymous foundation Gaudette Family Pine Hill Community Forest George & Laurie Weston Secure the Ledges Initiative Access Fund Mr. Rob Adair Anonymous foundation Sasha & Jack Tracy Ware Preserve Mr. Rob Adair Anonymous foundation Rick & Pennie Boyle World Fellowship Center Project Ingrid & Mark Albee Audubon Society of New Hampshire Richard Brown W. Robert Abbot & Claire M. Cifaloglio Ms. Carol S. Coonrod Tara Taylor & T.O. Currier Dave & Noreen Downs Margaret & Charles Felton Barbara Drake & John Gotjen Pete Lewis & Joanne Kelly Elizabeth Loughran Winston Montgomery & Peggy Nelson New Hampshire Charitable Foundation Ms. Alicia Ogawa Priscilla Ortiz Ronald Perrone & Diane Price Barbara Rockwell, Jr. Skip & Cathy Small Bruce & Barbara Stelle Andy Davis & Andrea Walsh Norma Wassel

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BUSINESS PARTNERS

A special THANK YOU to these business partners! Please support them, because when you do, they're supporting us!

CONTRIBUTE TO PLACE & SACO RIVER LEVEL





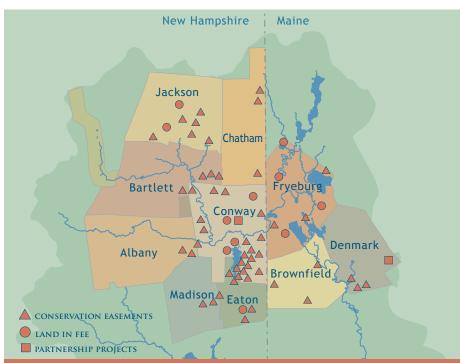




SWIFT RIVER LEVEL Jim Doucette Real Estate The Tarberry Company The Valley Originals White Birch Books White Mountain Oil & Propane White Mountain Puzzles Wyonegonic Camps

ELLIS RIVER LEVEL The Buttonwood Inn Dutch Bloemen Winkel Eastern Mountain Sports Edge of Maine Gallery **Emerald Tree Experts** Gamwell Caputo Kelsch & Co Good Vibes Coffee Roasters GrandyOats

Hastings Malia P.A. J-Town Deli & Country Store Minuteman Press Settlers Crossing Spice & Grain Tamarack Construction The Local Grocer Tuckerman Brewing Company Vintage Frameworks



At the close of 2019, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust and our partners had completed 69 www.usvlt.org for more detailed location information about these easements and preserves.

FINANCIAL REPORT (Year Ended December 31, 2019 - Unaudited)

COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES					
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total		
REVENUE:					
Membership Contributions	\$ 90,647	\$ -	\$ 90,647		
Grants and Donations	87,975	615,105	703,080		
Other	47,619	-	47,619		
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	148,861	(148,861)	-		
Total Operating Revenue EXPENSES:	\$375,102	\$ 466,244	\$ 841,346		
Program Services:					
Land Protection & Easement Acquisition	n \$193,577	\$ -	\$ 193,577		
Land Stewardship	74,767	-	74,767		
Total Program Services	268,344		268,344		
Management and General	83,994	-	83,994		
Fundraising	12,886	-	12,886		
Total Operating Expenses	365,223		365,223		
Change in Net Assets	\$ 9,879	\$ 466,244	\$476,123		

COMBINED	STATEMENT	OF FINANC	IAL POSITIO	N
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
ASSETS:				
Cash, Unrestricted	\$128,342	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 128,342
Cash, Restricted	-	639,730	-	639,730
Pledges Receivable	-	-	-	-
Prepaid Expenses	6,450	-	-	6,450
Beneficial Interest Held by Oth	iers -	-	222,944	222,944
Property & Equipment, net	4,223	-	-	4,223
Land & Conservation Easeme	ents -	-	1,950,337	1,950,337
Total Assets	\$139,015	\$ 639,730	\$2,173,281	\$2,952,026
LIABILITIES AND NET AS	SSETS:			
Acrued Expenses	\$21,668	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,668
Net Assets	117,347	639,730	2,173,281	2,930,358
Total Liabilities and Net Asse	ets			
	\$139,015	\$ 639,730	\$2,173,281	\$2,952,026

Unrestricted funds may be used for day to day operations. Temporarily restricted funds are grants and donations for a specific project or purpose to be used in the future. Permanently restricted assets include land, easements and stewardship endowment.



The Light in Between/Purlin Twigg-Smith

Financially, as well as operationally, 2019 was another strong year for the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust. When reviewing the organization's financial results, it is helpful to separate activities into two categories, operations (rent, phone, salaries, etc.) and special one-time projects. In 2019, the day-to-day operations generated an excess of revenues over expenses of nearly \$10,000, which compared favorably to the \$7,000 that was budgeted. Further, in 2019, one-time projects represented a net increase in Land Trust assets of over \$400,000. The major portion of this increase was a generous donation of land, supplemented by numerous cash grants relating to current and future land-protection projects. The success of 2019 has given USVLT a solid foundation for growth into its 20th year, as we take on ambitious new land protection projects and increase our stewardship and staff capacity.

Sources of financial support are member contributions, grants, outreach activities, business partnerships, and events such as Art Celebrates Place and Fields on the Saco. As we follow our 2017 Strategic Plan to its fruition, our land holdings, stewardship responsibilities, operational capacity, and outreach programming are all expanding. Going forward, the Land Trust will also be increasing its financial reserves commensurate with this growth. These reserves will:

- Help ensure conservation easement terms are satisfied and other stewardship responsibilities are met.
- Attract and retain qualified staff.
- Allow USVLT to engage in larger and more complicated land protection projects.

For the Land Trust to carry out its mission, the support of the local community is essential. The organization's continuing ability to preserve land for community benefit is only made possible with your support. Thank you.



*The financials reported here include income and expenses relating both to our operating budget, as well as campaigns run for special projects or specific land projects. While membership support accounts for 11% of total income in 2019, it accounts for an impressive 42% of "operating income" that is not tied to a specific land project. Thank you.