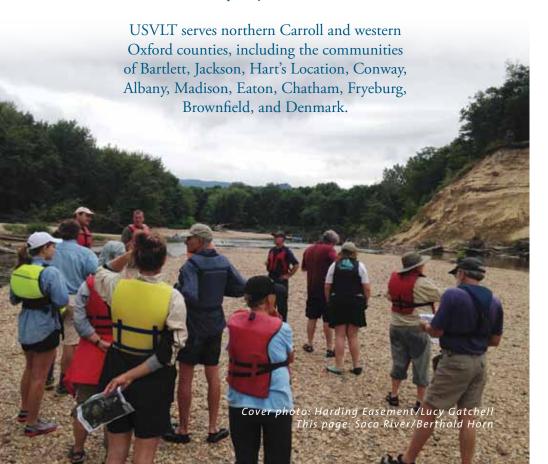
UPPER
SACO
VALLEY
LAND
TRUST





#### Preserving Land for Community Benefit

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



#### A MESSAGE FROM THE

# PRESIDENT

Doug Burnell

Introspection is inherent to producing an annual report, and USVLT is no exception. In 2014, our organization also initiated a formal process of reflection in our application for national-level certification with the Land Trust Alliance. Each spring we are afforded a grander perspective as well, by the annual conferences of the Maine and New Hampshire conservation communities, the NH version of which is called "Saving Special Places."

USVLT's four easement projects completed in 2014 rest firmly among those special places: securing the future of Weston's Rivercroft Farm, the Old Pinkham Farm in Jackson, historic Mount Surprise, and growing the Green Hills. These easements are outlined in more detail on pages 3 and 4.

On the horizon in 2015 are other opportunities to bring remarkable places under conservation, including the magnificent Lucy Farm, with its familiar upland farmstead and flood plain fields tucked between Cathedral Ledge and the meandering Saco River. We will also continue efforts to define and expand our holdings in the beautiful Cold River meadows of North Fryeburg, and improve trail networks and access across our Kearsarge easement properties, as well as our multi-faceted Monroe Lucas Preserve in East Conway.

Equally important, moving forward to better promote, amplify and define our mission of "preserving land for community benefit," we will draw on the ideas and visions of experienced conservationists, land professionals, and community leaders. We will reflect on the key questions of how better to help our communities cultivate and perpetuate that tangible sense of place, and to belong



in and care for these natural surroundings we call the Upper Saco Valley. Over and above completing good land-protection projects, what steps can we take to build reputation and capacity for saving special places that benefit our communities? We hope you, our members and friends, will be fully engaged in our common efforts to save more remarkable places for community benefit.

Doug Burnell

## LAND CONSERVATION

Mona Pinette

**PERSPECTIVE** 

Beginning almost two hundred years ago, both artists and writers were inspired by the pristine beauty and majestic panoramas of the Upper Saco Valley. Their works drew visitors to the area, looking to take in the grandeur of this special place for themselves. Many, having experienced the natural wonders, either moved to the area permanently, became second homeowners, or kept coming back as regular visitors.

You've heard of comfort food: those meals you enjoyed growing up that are special to you because of the happy memories with friends and family that they evoke in addition to the familiarity and enjoyment of the meal itself. For those of us who grew up or often visited this remarkable area, it is a "comfort place." I have wonderful memories of being on the land with family and friends, hiking, cross-country skiing, swimming, and taking in the beauty of frozen streams and clear, clean lakes, mountain vistas, and foliage and flowers as the seasons change. Today, when I return to these "comfort places" in the Upper Saco Valley, I feel an emotional lift and a sense of spiritual peace and fulfillment. I remember all the wonderful times spent here and am anxious to make more memories on the land.

At this point in my life, I'm anxious to share a sense of place. I want to make sure that young people today and beyond have access to the same pristine, wild areas that so affected me, and earlier generations. For me, there is no greater gift than ensuring that these cherished places, "comfort places", in the Upper Saco Valley are available for the next generations to enjoy.



# 2014 LAND ACQUISITIONS



#### WESTON'S RIVERCROFT FARM

Years in the making, Weston's Rivercroft Farm conservation easement in Fryeburg was finalized in early 2014. An area landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the farm has been in the Weston family for seven generations (since 1799). The easement protects remarkable attributes, including 166.7 acres of prime agricultural soils and intact habitat areas, 6,050 feet of Saco River frontage, 2,420 feet of undeveloped frontage on Route 113/ River Street, many of the farm's historic buildings, state-ranked rare natural communities (e.g., Silver Maple Floodplain Forest that buffers the river) and surface and groundwater quality in the Saco River watershed.

#### MOUNT SURPRISE EASEMENT

Another community gem preserved during 2014 was the Mount Surprise easement, in Bartlett's Kearsarge neighborhood. Between 1887 and 1895, Mount Surprise and 40 surrounding acres were purchased by John Worcester, and ownership has remained within the family. Historically, the "carriage road" at the end of Mount



Surprise Road connected the property to the area's old hotels and inns, and remains open to pedestrian travel. The easement allows for sustainable forestry, enabling the once-cherished views across the Valley to be re-established and then maintained. Two other Land Trust easements are adjacent to Mount Surprise, the Burnell and Osgood properties. All three allow public access.

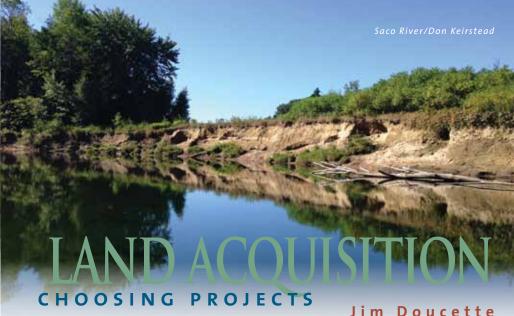


#### GREEN HILLS PRESERVE EXPANSION

Thanks to a partnership between the Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy, the Green Hills Preserve grew by 1300 acres to a total acreage of 5500 in 2014. This purchase protects high quality wetlands, including seven miles of headwater streams, habitat for 73 species of breeding and migratory birds, a large deer wintering yard, a unique natural community called "pitch pine rocky ridge" and a black gum swamp — perhaps the most northerly example in New Hampshire. The Preserve's expansion creates the largest intact block of conservation land in the Mount Washington Valley, adjacent to Town Lands, State Forest, and the White Mountain National Forest, as well as other Land Trust easement lands.

#### PINKHAM FARM

Capping 2014 was the 62-acre Pinkham Farm easement in Jackson, with its stunning northwesterly views of Mount Washington. Much of the land comprising the former Pinkham Farm (1790) was reassembled over a 40-year period by the landowner who donated the conservation easement to the Land Trust immediately prior to transferring the tract to Jackson Ski Touring Foundation. The property includes several of JSTF's most popular trails, and equally important, over 500 feet of Wildcat River frontage, six acres of wetlands, three small headwater streams and associated riparian habitat. This land is open to JSTF members and ticketholders during the ski season, and to the general public at other times of the year.



When we are approached by a landowner interested in preserving their land, the process starts with a discussion of their protection goals and an onsite visit to understand the nature of those goals and other features of the property. Then the work begins. Is this property one that contains characteristics that are significant in the big picture? The Land Trust has to balance project opportunities with the limited resources and capacity we have at that time.

Over the last couple of years we have taken all the known data regarding soils, wetlands, specific habitats, ecosystems, endangered species, watersheds and many other specific traits and compiled them into a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) whereby each of the specific traits can be looked at as individual layers or as composites of different layers. This was a big project and one that is significant in understanding where the most sensitive and important properties are within our service area.

This general impression is then validated by taking the property through a matrix where its characteristics and significance can be graded and quantified. Is the property of significance within the NRI, will preserving the property support or enhance forestry, agriculture, water resources, wildlife, wildlife corridors, special ecological values, recreation, scenery, and cultural/historical resources important to each community?

If all is a 'go', we next need to work through the process of creating an easement document that protects the important features as well as allows the landowners to maintain their intended uses of the property. But that's a topic for another time.

### CELEBRATING THE LAND WE LOVE

The Land Trust conserves land for many reasons: we often mention protecting rare habitats, or keeping active agricultural land in agriculture. But we also preserve land for other reasons: because of the palpable "sense of place" certain landscapes instill, or to preserve a cherished view, or to honor those who came before us. More than anything, we preserve land because we love it. The Land Trust shares the special places we love through two ongoing programs.

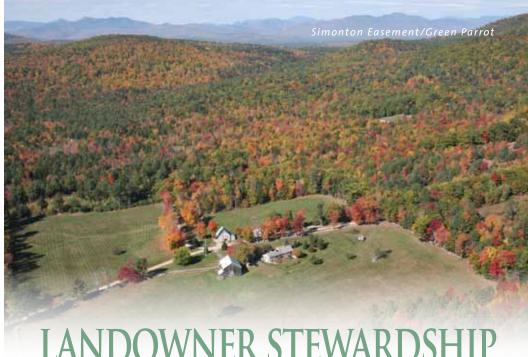
Local artists invited to take part in our Art Celebrates Place program create art inspired by our conserved land, whether in the form of a painting or a musical composition. Artists work on their creations throughout the year and then share their work at this event in April, together with other local painters, singers, songwriters, and poets. It's truly a remarkable celebration of our love of land\*.

Our *Easement Exploration Series* features tours of our conservation lands. In 2014, explorations ranged from a tracking workshop to a discussion about apple cultivation. Other events included a hunt for rare plants, two popular river "float" trips, and a trip to Foss Mountain in blueberry season. All of these trips were an opportunity to showcase the remarkable places we've helped conserve, and to share our love of the land.

Make sure that you're on our mailing list to receive invitations to Art Celebrates Place (annually in the first half of April). Announcements about our Easement Exploration Series are by email only; email info@usvlt.org to get on the list. We hope to see you "on the land!"

\*Art Celebrates Place would not happen without the dedication of three amazing volunteers: Marnie Cobbs, Lucy Gatchell and Linda Gray. Thank you!



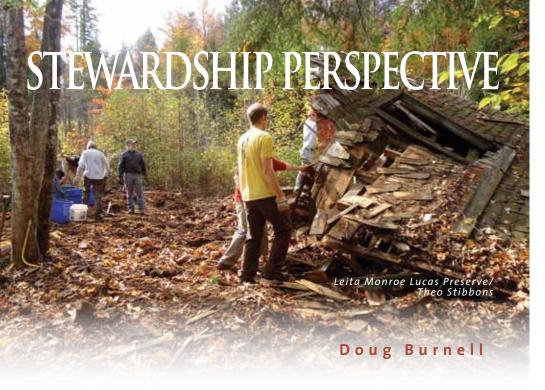


### LANDOWNER STEWARDSHIP

When Ward and Nancy Simonton bought the Chamberlain Farm over 16 years ago, they took over a working landscape of forest, fields and buildings that had changed little in 150 years. The farm came with an existing conservation easement (originally with Audubon and then transitioned to the Land Trust), which they considered a benefit rather than a limitation. The easement fit well with their belief that they are the current stewards of the property and carry the responsibility for managing it well during their tenure. When the time comes, they will pass this 77-acre property on to the next owners with working fields, well-maintained original buildings, and a stewardship responsibility.

Nancy and Ward are passionate about their property and helping to develop a conservation culture in the Upper Saco River Valley. They know that sharing the sense of place of Chamberlain Farm with neighbors who come to purchase Christmas trees, who enjoy winter activities during the Great Maine Outdoor weekend, who participate in the Land Trust's easement explorations, in Tin Mountain events, and in local library programs on site, is a key component to this mission. They believe it's important to offer access to the land and hold events so that people can enjoy its beauty and make a connection to the natural world.

For the Simontons, the farm provides peace, serenity and a refuge from the digital world. They take great comfort knowing the farm will be maintained as it is today in perpetuity. Come join them at a future event and experience what makes Chamberlain Farm such a remarkable place.



My doing a little historical deed research and boundary reconnaissance on USVLT's new Monroe Lucas Preserve in East Conway turned into captivation with a place of real natural beauty masked by the effects of some heavy logging. I have since experienced its many moods, in all seasons, spending many days here and there slowly building by hand pathways up to the Thomas Dewing cottage site and the Weeks Brook cascades.

I have occasionally even been able to cajole busier people and captive relatives to come out and join me – like when the blackberries are on, my 2-year-old grandson can be whisked away, or I have discovered some spot just too beautiful not to share. Late last fall before a cold rain drove us away, USVLT held its first Preserve clean-up, during which a crew of hearty volunteers picked out two truckloads of asphalt-shingle and metal pieces, dismantled and piled up unrotted wooden building members, and laid out relics of family life 100 years ago at the cottage ruins, a striking artist's summer-home site up in the middle of the property.

After recently completing a management plan with our Land Committee, wild-life biologist Ellen Snyder brought forth many new ideas for the Preserve, including maintaining mowed openings, setting aside a no-cut natural area, and even looping my path further up the brook, back over a scenic ridge, and through the cottage site. Besides all the trail work to complete, we now have a trailhead parking lot to permit and build, and a kiosk and memorial stone to erect there. There is a lot more hands-on fun to be had; come – let me show you around!

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

William Abbott

Two words defined our work in 2014: *community support*. With community support:

- We finalized the Weston's Rivercroft Farm easement;
- We secured funding for and completed our Mount Surprise project;
- We played a critical supporting role in the "Let's Grow Green Hills" campaign with The Nature Conservancy; and
- We conserved more than 60 acres of recreation land and rich habitat in Jackson with the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation.

Our 2014 projects elicited such strong support because they are all *remarkable places*. Whether you are passionate about conserving farmland, supporting wildlife and "habitat blocks," or allowing public access on land with cherished views, our projects spoke to you – and we could not do our work without your support. 2014 was also a year of profound growth:

- We increased our membership by 20%, demonstrating our relevance to the communities we serve;
- We received The Nature Conservancy's 2014 Partnership Award for our work with the "Let's Grow Green Hills" campaign;
- We garnered grant funding to prepare for accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance;
- We received pledges of funding from both state and federal organizations for our recently announced Lucy Family Farm Project, which will conserve 44 acres of farmland near Cathedral Ledge in Conway;



- We completed three more management plans for preserves we hold "in fee" and planned for access improvements on the Mount Surprise property; and
- We passed the benchmark (in November) of having completed 50 projects since our founding!

We look forward to sharing more special places— in 2015 and beyond. Thank you for your support, and I hope you'll continue to invest in this critical work.

William B. Abbott

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Judy & Dan Kennedy

(continued)

Ms. Faith Knowles Jeff & Susan Lathrop Robert & Susan Laufer Ms. Myrna E. Lloyd Lewis & Rosemary Lloyd Mr. Caleb Lucy Ms. Carol Lyman Elaine Stockbridge & Andrea Masters Ioel Horn & Susan McGrath Mr. Chris Meier Robin Melavalin Erik & Jen Nelson Mr. Michael Oakes Mr. Al Oliveira Mr. A. Neill Osgood II Phil & Ann Ostroski Dexter & Susan Paine Susan Doctrow & John Peterson Mr. Christopher W. Pingree William & Susan Psaledakis David Publicover & Betsy Rand Mrs. Joke Russell Glenn & Sonnhilde Saunders Ms. Mary E. Shea Ms. Barbara B. Smith Betsy & Drew Smith Kevin Donohoe & Laurel Smith Wavne & Theresa Stanton Dr. Charles Thorne James & Karen Umberger Ms. Felicia van den Broeke Ms. Kathleen VanNote Ms. Daphne Wall Mr. Richard A. Ware Mr. Edward O. Wolcott Timothy Breen & Julie Yates Mr. Robert Zimmerman Terry Zych

#### MT. SURPRISE GRANTS

An anonymous family foundation Buckingham Mountain Foundation Fields Pond Foundation Gibson/Woodbury Charitable Foundation Kendal C. & Anna Ham Charitable Foundation Connie Davis Watson Foundation

#### MT. SURPRISE **GIFT IN CELEBRATION** OF HER LIFE:

Dorothy J. Brownell by David & Rosemary Armington Evenor Armington Fund

#### **MT. SURPRISE GIFTS IN MEMORY OF:**

Charles & Patricia Osgood by Julie Yates & Timothy Breen Charles & Patricia Osgood by Amanda Brooks Charles & Patricia Osgood by Robert Constantine Charles & Patricia Osgood by Susan Edenberg Charles & Patricia Osgood by A. Neill Osgood II Dorothy J. Brownell by David R. Brownell

**GROW GREEN HILLS** Mr. Rob Adair Anonymous (5) An anonymous foundation Doug & Candy Armstrong Lori & Frank Balantic Mr. Ioe Berry Ed & Karyl Bisson Ms. Marianne Borowski Dr. Andres Braendli Odd Bersvendsen & Sally Brassill Mr. David W. Breeden Doug & Kathy Burnell Mr. & Mrs. John Butler Mr. Alec M. Choremi Ms. Ellen Wiggin Mr. Neil Clark Darlene & Daniel Clarke Mr. & Mrs. James Cobbs Robert & Barbara Conley Charlotte & Herb Cooper Ms. Chris Costello Bob & Priscilla Dannies Mr. George H. Diller Mr. Richard Dole Larry & Cathy Donoghue Mr. Christopher Doucette Harvest & Jim Doucette Linda & Hank Dresch Mona Pinette & Brendan DuBois Roland & Bette Dubois

John & Patricia Dunn

Tom & Ruth Earle Mr. Peter B. Edwards Scott & Susan Ellison Suzanne & C. Anthony Federer Mr. Steven J. Formisani Roderick & Susan Forsman Mrs. Iudith Fowler Carmine & Marvellen Frele Mr. Larry Garland Ms. Gloria Hannon Sam & Betsey Harding Mrs. Elaine Hatch Mr. Doug Haver Ms. Dorothy E. Hender Mr. Doug Hjelmstad Margery & Howard Huemmler Jamie Riel & Caren Hutchinson Dr. & Mrs. Anthony Iorfino Kenneth & Sarah Kimball Paul & Catalina Kirsch Ms. Faith Knowles Robert W. & Harriet G. Kruszyna Jeff & Susan Lathrop Maple Leaf Motel Mr. David Matesky Susan & William R. McCarthy Kristen & David McDermott Ms. Miriam Morrell Dave & Meg Murphy Ms. Kathleen C. Murphy Mrs. Patricia Nute Thomas L. & Grace N. O'Connor Phil & Ann Ostroski Stephen Fink & Maria Palmisano Alix & Bob Pratt Mr. & Mrs. Geoffrey Race Carl & Jadwiga Rosenthal Rotary Club of North Conway Mr. & Mrs. Elbridge Russell Iim & Chris Salmon Mr. Robert D. Sgarzi Mr. Nicholas Skinner Kevin Donohoe & Laurel Smith Ron & Kim Smith Wayne & Theresa Stanton Mr. Robert D. Stearns Dr. Charles Thorne Ms. Edith Tucker Ms. Linda Turcotte Ms. Frona Vicksell Dennis & Johanna Vienneau June McLeavy & Michael Weeder Ann & Tim Whalen Mr. Edward O. Wolcott

Anne C. Chase & Ron Zager

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: Doug Burnell, Conway Vice-President: Tom Henderson, Madison Secretary: Cynthia Briggs, North Conway (through June 2014) Secretary: Dexter Harding, Jackson (from July 2014) Treasurer: Jim Hastings, Bartlett

> Ann Bennett, Jackson Jim Doucette, South Conway Tom Earle, South Conway Sarah Garlick, North Conway Tom Gross, South Conway Stefan Jackson, Bridgton (through October 2014) Wendell Lees, Kearsarge Christopher Meier, Conway Mona Pinette, Center Conway/Exeter Burgess Smith, Brownfield David Thurlow (Honorary)

### STAFF

William Abbott Executive Director

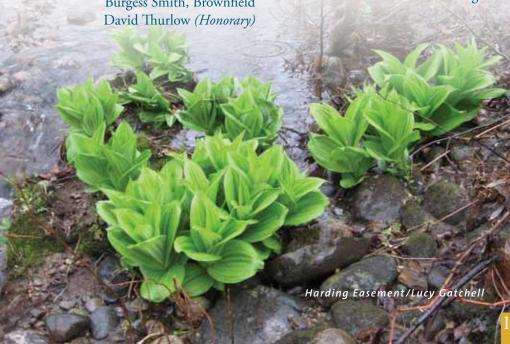
Linda Comeau Land Protection Specialist

Stefan Jackson Development Associate (from November 2014)

## **SUMMER INTERNS**

April Costa St. Lawrence University (graduate)

> Hannah Kiesler Bates College



# FINANCIAL REPORT

(Year Ended December 31, 2014 — Unaudited)

COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES						
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total			
<b>OPERATING REVENUE:</b>						
Membership Contributions	\$ 45,141	\$ -	\$ 45,141			
Grants and Donations	43,278	420,027	463,305			
Other	18,685	-	18,685			
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	619,235	(619,235)	-			
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	726,339	(199,208)	527,131			
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES:</b> Program Services:						
Easement Acquisition	\$ 646,674	\$ -	\$ 646,674			
Land Stewardship	35,943	-	35,943			
Total Program Services	682,617	-	682,617			
Management and General	35,076	_	35,076			
Fundraising	2,389	-	2,389			
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	720,082	-	720,082			
Change in Net Assets	\$ 6,257	\$ (199,208)	(192,951)			

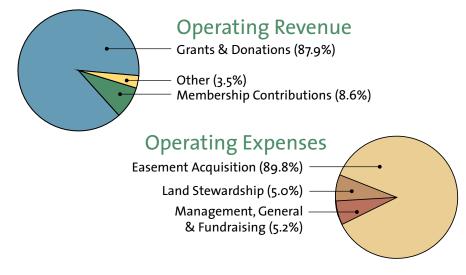
COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION					
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total	
ASSETS:					
Cash, Unrestricted	\$ 56,294	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 56,294	
Cash, Restricted	-	231,155	-	231,155	
Prepaid Expenses	1,816	-	-	1,816	
Beneficial Interest Held by Oth	ers -	-	168,971	168,971	
Property & Equipment, net	2,363	-	-	2,363	
Land & Conservation Easeme	nts -	-	1,106,363	1,106,363	
Deposits	7,404	-	-	7,404	
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$ 67,877	\$ 231,155	\$1,275,334	\$1,574,366	
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:					
Acrued Expenses	\$ 4,099	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,099	
Net Assets	63,778	231,155	1,275,334	1,570,267	
Total Liabilities and Net Assets					
	\$ 67,877	\$ 231,155	\$1,275,334	\$1,574,366	

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.

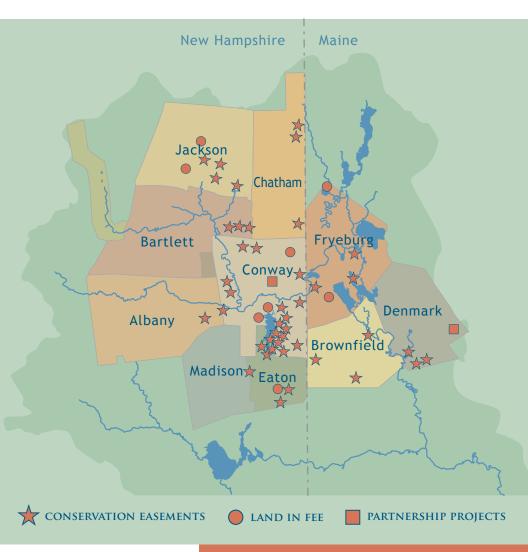


Thanks to the generosity of its members and friends, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is in a solid financial position with adequate liquidity to withstand short term, unexpected demands on cash and has the resources to grow in the future. In 2014, operations enjoyed slightly greater income than the related expense. Also in the past two years, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust has been very successful in raising funds for special projects including Weston's Rivercroft Farm, Mount Surprise and Grow Green Hills. The completion of these special projects means that the funds raised for them in previous years were no longer restricted and were released in 2014 to complete them. This results in a negative balance in the Temporarily Restricted Activities for 2014. For more detailed financial information please go to www.guidestar.com or contact USVLT.

For the Land Trust to continue its mission, it must continue to receive and increase the support of the local community and those members and friends who share its sense of purpose. Initiatives are in place to increase membership, increase the endowment and, more immediately, increase involvement of the local business community that relies on the natural assets of the organization's service area to attract customers to their place of business.



### **CELEBRATING SPECIAL PLACES**





PO Box 424, North Conway NH 03860 (603) 356-9683 • info@usvlt.org www.usvlt.org At the close of 2014, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust had acquired 43 conservation easements and 8 lands in fee permanently protecting 7,915 acres. Our participation in fundraising for Perley Mills and the Green Hills expansion has protected another 2,900 acres. Please see www. usvlt.org for more detailed location information for these easements and preserves.