2018 was dynamic for the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, across all seasons. The acquisition of the Pine Hill Community Forest in June capped one of the largest and most complex projects in USVLT’s history. Art Celebrates Place moved across the border to Fryeburg Academy, where the new venue provided a perfect backdrop for an evening of art on display and onstage, all during an April snowstorm. Building on 2017’s successful Fields on the Saco event, the 2018 fall harvest dinner tripled its income (thanks to the generosity of our diners and donors!). Membership was the highest in the organization’s history and we ended another year on a financial high note.

2018 also brought home a reminder about the “long road.” While Pine Hill and the Ware Preserve were acquired, these transactions were really just the first step of a rich – and permanent – relationship of stewarding the land into the future. In the case of Pine Hill, that responsibility will be shared with a formal advisory committee comprised of town officials, school district staffers, and representatives from other constituencies.

Partnerships, like that embodied in the Pine Hill Advisory Committee, have been a consistent theme during 2018. Most USVLT undertakings were partnership projects:

• With the Access Fund and Friends of the Ledges, we launched a fundraising campaign for the Secure the Ledges Initiative, bolstering awareness about public-access threats to Whitehorse and Cathedral Ledges.
• Thanks to partnerships with the Granite Backcountry Alliance and the White Mountain National Forest, historic ski trails are seeing a renaissance.
• Through our water initiative, towns are advocating for water-quality and aquifer protection ordinances.
• Together with the World Fellowship Center in Albany, we exceeded our budget goal to preserve over 400 acres in the Whitton Pond watershed (stay tuned for the completion of this project in 2019).

Your support has been critical to these stories of success, and to the growth of our organization. Thank you.

William Abbott, Executive Director
Doug Burnell, President
Mountain snow arrived in November in the East Branch valley, and by year’s end, a real New England winter was underway, the sort that lasts five months, start to finish. That was just fine with powder hounds, and inaugurated a new era for glade skiing on historic terrain.

The north shoulder of Bartlett Mountain in Intervale has a rich history of skiing, beginning in the mid-1930s when the Civilian Conservation Corps first cut a trail from East Branch Road behind the New England Inn to Bartlett’s summit. Initially, skiers hiked up the recently established Maple Villa Trail and skied down through open glades. A few years later, the Intervale Ski Area used much of the same terrain, lift-served with the newly invented J-bar, before falling into disuse in the 1980s. The glades are now being revived through a dynamic partnership among USVLT, the White Mountain National Forest, and Granite Backcountry Alliance (GBA), a nonprofit group dedicated to backcountry skiing opportunities in northern New England.

A key objective of this partnership was the purchase of the Ware Preserve on East Branch Road, which now serves as the gateway to glade skiing upslope on the National Forest. Project costs approached $100,000, and included the permanent protection of 48 acres of forestland contiguous with the National Forest, as well as establishment of a parking area and trailhead, and the dedication of a financial reserve for future improvements and stewardship. Instrumental to the effort was a cadre of dedicated volunteers, providing the manpower to cut brush, clear saplings, and re-establish routes.

The project honors Richard Ware’s conservation legacy. The longtime Kearsarge resident, who died in 2018, had decades earlier purchased the property with the hopes of guiding the land toward permanent protection. That initial vision has now become reality, and doubly so. While USVLT owns the property, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests holds a perpetual conservation easement on the land. The easement also guarantees pedestrian access to the property.

Projects of this sort are possible only though the synergy and commitment of like-minded organizations, including GBA, the Connie Davis Watson Foundation, the Fields Pond Foundation, HEB Engineers, and our generous community of supporters.

**Art Celebrates Place Shines in New Venue**

As winter snows melted, Arts Celebrates Place ushered in spring at its new venue, the Leura Hill Eastman Performing Arts Center at Fryeburg Academy. Once again the event showcased delectable local food offerings, music, and gallery walls filled with the work of local artists from Mount Washington Valley and western Maine. Enriching the evening in 2018 was a performance by Jeanne Limmer’s Axis Dance Company with student performers weaving in and around hanging silk panels, painted by Jay Rancourt.

Each year a suite of different conservation properties inspire the resulting creative efforts. The theme in 2019 is the Pine Hill Community Forest, and April 5th promises another exciting evening, with more paintings and a broader spectrum of visual and performing arts.

Words fall short when it comes to thanking the individuals who orchestrate Art Celebrates Place, including its founders Marnie Cobbs, Lucy Gatchell, Kay Leigh Kearns and Linda Gray. Additional kudos go to Linda, who four years ago launched and has shepherded the Arts Celebrates Place Calendar. The 2019 edition of this month-by-month compilation of landscapes by local artists will be available in mid-summer.
Spring is a time of loosening up and breaking free. Here in northern New England, this is an incremental process until all at once the energy is released. Long nights give way to choruses of birds, trickling icicles feed rushing rivers, green sprigs and swelling buds are lush fields and shaded forests a few weeks later.

Water epitomizes spring in many ways, from mud season to smelt runs. Water is also a critical natural resource that permeates much of the work undertaken by the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust. If a property has exemplary wetlands, or overlays one of the region’s aquifers, it emerges as a priority for protection. And yet, water as a “target” for conservation is tricky, since it doesn’t stay in one place. Because surface- and ground-water can both flow from a protected property into an area that is not, and back again, we have been spearheading a more inclusive strategy for water resource protection. As detailed in last year’s annual report, we have been working with the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) on identifying potential contamination sources within our New Hampshire towns, and we shared this information with them in 2018. Several expressed interest in doing more and are now working with USVLT and DES to protect their water resources by adopting aquifer-protection ordinances. Each ordinance will be based on DES’s template and modified to fit the needs of individual towns. Still in its initial stages, this critical work has far-reaching implications. Once such ordinances are adopted, we can rest a little easier knowing that our water resources – whether on conservation properties or not – are safeguarded.

Great Brook Easement

The late ‘60s and early ‘70s bore witness to a shift in perspective and the birth of a new environmental awareness, thanks to offshore oil spills, Earthrise on Apollo 8, and the publication of Silent Spring. In response, America created the Environmental Protection Agency and a host of environmental laws, among them the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

It only seems fitting, then, that USVLT protected an additional half-mile of river frontage along Mount Washington Valley’s own designated Wild and Scenic River, 50 years after the act’s passage. The Wildcat River system in Jackson (including portions of tributaries such as Bog Brook and Great Brook, where this easement is located), is one of only two Wild and Scenic rivers in New Hampshire. For centuries, residents and visitors have celebrated the river as Jackson’s agricultural, scenic, and recreational central artery.

A group of passionate residents fought to defeat a proposed hydroelectric dam in the mid-1980s, in part through designating the Wildcat River system as Wild and Scenic (accomplished in 1988). The original designation spurred the protection of over 800 acres within the watershed (mostly through donations of conservation easements to the Town of Jackson). Many of those same advocates helped found USVLT 12 years later as the area’s local land trust. The addition of the Great Brook easement to USVLT’s conservation lands follows in this proud tradition, and is a testament to the power of water, our communities, and shared history.
Conway Select Board, the Conway Conservation Commission, SAU 9, local trail organizations, and TMCC and USVLT. As such, the committee presents a mutually beneficial avenue to strengthen key relationships.

Partnership and collaboration are also at the heart of the “Secure the Ledges Initiative” – an effort to permanently protect land and safeguard public access at the bases of White Horse and Cathedral Ledges near North Conway. A collaborative effort between Friends of the Ledges, the Access Fund and USVLT, the Initiative got a boost with the donation of a key parcel of land in 2018. Thanks to the generosity of the land’s previous owner, Jim Ansara of Essex, Massachusetts, the property had remained open to public use and retained its natural character since he purchased it in 1997.

While USVLT now owns the parcel, the Access Fund is the holder of its permanent conservation and recreation easement. Conserving this key tract secures public access along the Bryce Path and Bryce Link, and protects the forested foreground seen from both ledges. This initiative is ongoing and we hope to secure access across two additional parcels in the near future. Stay tuned!

The snowshoes, skis and micro-spikes have been put away, and the muddy country roads are finally dry. Summer in the mountains has arrived, along with two new Land Trust assets to add to your summertime explorations. Grab your gear and come explore two of USVLT’s latest conservation successes, Pine Hill Community Forest and the Ansara parcel.

One of USVLT’s largest and most complex land-conservation projects to date, the 436-acre Pine Hill Community Forest almost completely surrounds Kennett High School in Conway. Its acquisition depended on a dynamic fundraising partnership with Tin Mountain Conservation Center (TMCC), as well as grants from the Open Space Institute’s Community Forest Fund, NH’s Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, the Fields Pond Foundation, the William P. Wharton Fund, the Davis Conservation Foundation, the Town of Conway, and the Marshall Family Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation. Formerly owned by the Kennett Company, this unique mixed-use parcel provides important environmental benefits, including wildlife habitat and surface- and ground-water protection. Equally significant, the forest offers a range of recreational assets, from Saco River access to the Conway Rec Path, as well as an extensive network of other multi-use trails.

The parcel’s proximity to Kennett High School affords rich opportunities to widen and deepen the educational and extra-curricular experiences of students. The school’s mountain-biking team already accesses trails for training rides, and USVLT and TMCC hope to partner with educators to further develop hands-on outdoor environmental programs out in the forest.

An advisory committee representing a diverse constituency is already guiding the stewardship of Pine Hill, utilizing the skills of its members from the Conway Select Board, the Conway Conservation Commission, SAU 9, local trail organizations, and TMCC and USVLT. As such, the committee presents a mutually beneficial avenue to strengthen key relationships.

Partnership and collaboration are also at the heart of the “Secure the Ledges Initiative” – an effort to permanently protect land and safeguard public access at the bases of White Horse and Cathedral Ledges near North Conway. A collaborative effort between Friends of the Ledges, the Access Fund and USVLT, the Initiative got a boost with the donation of a key parcel of land in 2018. Thanks to the generosity of the land’s previous owner, Jim Ansara of Essex, Massachusetts, the property had remained open to public use and retained its natural character since he purchased it in 1997.

While USVLT now owns the parcel, the Access Fund is the holder of its permanent conservation and recreation easement. Conserving this key tract secures public access along the Bryce Path and Bryce Link, and protects the forested foreground seen from both ledges. This initiative is ongoing and we hope to secure access across two additional parcels in the near future. Stay tuned!

EXPLORING NEW PROPERTIES

The snowshoes, skis and micro-spikes have been put away, and the muddy country roads are finally dry. Summer in the mountains has arrived, along with two new Land Trust assets to add to your summertime explorations. Grab your gear and come explore two of USVLT’s latest conservation successes, Pine Hill Community Forest and the Ansara parcel.

One of USVLT’s largest and most complex land-conservation projects to date, the 436-acre Pine Hill Community Forest almost completely surrounds Kennett High School in Conway. Its acquisition depended on a dynamic fundraising partnership with Tin Mountain Conservation Center (TMCC), as well as grants from the Open Space Institute’s Community Forest Fund, NH’s Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, the Fields Pond Foundation, the William P. Wharton Fund, the Davis Conservation Foundation, the Town of Conway, and the Marshall Family Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation. Formerly owned by the Kennett Company, this unique mixed-use parcel provides important environmental benefits, including wildlife habitat and surface- and ground-water protection. Equally significant, the forest offers a range of recreational assets, from Saco River access to the Conway Rec Path, as well as an extensive network of other multi-use trails.

The parcel’s proximity to Kennett High School affords rich opportunities to widen and deepen the educational and extra-curricular experiences of students. The school’s mountain-biking team already accesses trails for training rides, and USVLT and TMCC hope to partner with educators to further develop hands-on outdoor environmental programs out in the forest.

An advisory committee representing a diverse constituency is already guiding the stewardship of Pine Hill, utilizing the skills of its members from the Conway Select Board, the Conway Conservation Commission, SAU 9, local trail organizations, and TMCC and USVLT. As such, the committee presents a mutually beneficial avenue to strengthen key relationships.

Partnership and collaboration are also at the heart of the “Secure the Ledges Initiative” – an effort to permanently protect land and safeguard public access at the bases of White Horse and Cathedral Ledges near North Conway. A collaborative effort between Friends of the Ledges, the Access Fund and USVLT, the Initiative got a boost with the donation of a key parcel of land in 2018. Thanks to the generosity of the land’s previous owner, Jim Ansara of Essex, Massachusetts, the property had remained open to public use and retained its natural character since he purchased it in 1997.

While USVLT now owns the parcel, the Access Fund is the holder of its permanent conservation and recreation easement. Conserving this key tract secures public access along the Bryce Path and Bryce Link, and protects the forested foreground seen from both ledges. This initiative is ongoing and we hope to secure access across two additional parcels in the near future. Stay tuned!
Fall is the “gathering in” season, a time to stack firewood, establish back-to-school routines, and haul in and put up the harvest. The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust service area boasts superlative agricultural soils which rival the best in the Northeast. While farming in New England once meant dairy, there has been a sea change shift toward diversification. Today, the range of available products reflects the energy and ingenuity of farmers, offering everything from mushrooms, meats, and cheeses to staples like maple syrup, honey, and a stunning array of produce and value-added items.

Yet here, as across the country, diversified family-scale farms face huge challenges. USVLT is committed to the regional food system as a whole, acknowledging that conservation of farmland is only one component of a healthy system. Analysts assert that New England has the potential to produce more than 50% of its food by 2060, with associated economic, health, and environmental benefits. With that in mind, USVLT is working to increase the size and resiliency of local markets, to support farmers, and to increase collaboration within our food system.

As USVLT’s Local Food Systems Advocate, Jesse Wright is focused on assuring that farmers have the technical tools and available support to operate at a profit, and that more consumers and regional businesses are seeking out local products. The scope of her position was amplified in 2018 by the receipt of a $30,000 USDA Rural Business Development grant, which funds a three-prong initiative including Scaling Up Workshops launching in January of 2019. These workshops offer a window into efficiency and record keeping, marketing, and the financial implications of growing a business. Participants also receive 15 hours of assistance from a consultant, and $500 seed money to implement lessons learned.

The grant’s second component involves strengthening or helping start Farm-to-School programs that share the importance of our local food system with our youngest generations. The third prong is a strategic and collaborative marketing effort highlighting our area’s family-scale farms.

Eating local and supporting our region’s farms begin with awareness of who and where they are, of course. To that end, Wright, along with UNH Cooperative Extension’s Olivia Saunders, publish several farm guides. These guides (digital versions available under “Publications” on the usvlt.org website) are organized by farm or by product, as well as listing which farms run a CSA program. There’s even a version specific for chefs telling what’s available for wholesale orders when, and from whom, and a calendar of local farmers’ markets. Together, by conscientiously investing our food dollars with our neighboring farms, we can help make our local food system more resilient.

**Local Farms Fêted at Fields on the Saco**

Despite the crisp weather outside, our donors and volunteers came out in force to celebrate local conservation efforts at the 2018 Fields on the Saco dinner. Held at the Hardy Farm, overlooking the fertile fields along the Old Course of the Saco in West Fryeburg, the venue and food were stunning and perfectly paired. Featuring chefs from the Oxford House Inn, Thompson House Eatery, Libby’s Bistro & SAAlT Pub, White Mountain Cider Company, Wildcat Inn & Tavern, Vintage Baking Company, Tavern at Sunset Hill, and food from many of the member farms of the Mount Washington Valley Eaters & Growers, the evening was a culinary and agricultural celebration. It was a huge financial success, too, thanks to the generosity of the supporters gathered. Cheers to the 2019 celebration, October 20th!
USVLT sincerely thanks all of its 2018 contributors. We couldn’t do it without you!
MEMBERS (continued)

Charlene & Ronald Hibbs
Pat & John Higgins
Mr. George Hill
James Hill Jr.
Mr. Doug Hjelmstad
Jean & James Hodgins
John & Patricia Hoffman
Matt & Jen Hohenboken
Ms. Lisa Holcomb
Lisa Holcomb
Matt & Jen Hohenboken
John & Patricia Hoffman
Jean & James Hodgins
Mr. Doug Hjelmstad
James Hill Jr.
Mr. George Hill
Pat & John Higgins
Charlene & Ronald Hibbs
Pat & John Higgins
Mr. George Hill
James Hill Jr.
Mr. Doug Hjelmstad
Jean & James Hodgins
John & Patricia Hoffman
Matt & Jen Hohenboken
Ms. Lisa Holcomb

Southern View at Sunset/ Ann Bennett
MEMBERS (continued)
Gary & Sarah Punskey L
John Putnam
Geoff & Betsy Race
Jane Rancourt
Ms. Jay Rancourt
David Publicover & Betsy Rand
Derek & Candy Rankin
Tyler & Anne Ray
Marcia & John Reed
Paul & Gwen Reiss
Eugene Resnick
Mr. Richard Reuper
John & Jane Rhoads
George & Frances Rhoads
Jacob Rich
Dody Coman & Katy Robb
Dan & Amy Robins L
Barbara Rockwell, Jr.
Marilyn Rodes
Amy Rogers L
Anne Rogers L
Ned & Liza Rogerson
Chris Rollings
Alex Moot & Nancy Roosa
Dagmar von Schwerin & Thomas Rose
Sue Kalt & Josh Rosen
Carl & Jadwiga Rosenthal M
Cheryl & Jason Roth
Karl Cowan & Erika Rowland M
Mike Roy
Mr. Joshua Royte
R&R Woodworkers
Cindy & Brett Russell
Mr. & Mrs. Elbridge Russell L
Jim Salmon
Rich & Deb Saima
Sandy Beach Trust L
Glenn & Sonnhilde Saunders
Ms. Elaine Schirito
Peter & Kathryn Schoch
Leslie & Warren Schomaker
Joshua Schonborn
Marten & Patricia Schooman
Robert & Suzanne Scolamiero
Tim & Sheila Scott
Ms. Peg Scully
Judith & David Seddon
Mr. & Mrs. Russ Seybold
R.W. Seymour
Mr. Robert Sgarzi
Paul & Kathy Jo Shackford
Sheel Shah
Nik Shah & Jessica Bennett
Shah
Julianne Sharp
Mr. David Shedd M
Troy & Kara Shellhamer
Hamish & Melanie Sherlock
Amy Sherwood
Diane & Thomas Shipp
Whitney Silberhart
Ms. Peg Silloway
Diana Simonds L
Moira Simonds L
Eugene Simonds L
Gerald Simone L
Tony & Jenny Simone LVM
Ward & Nancy Simonston L
Dominique Sindayganza
Mr. Nicholas Skinner
Ted & Bonny Slader
Skip & Cathy Small
Ms. Barbara Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Burgess Smith VM
David R. Smith
Mrs. Eleanor Smith
Ron & Kim Smith
Kevin Donohoe & Laurel Smith
Linda & Noel Smith
Susan Beane & Peter Smith VM
Mr. R. Blake Smith
The South Conway Club
Sojourn Candle
Ross Speer
Warren & Darlene Spence
Dan & Molly Sperduto
Spice & Grain
Philip Squitieri
Ellen Snyder & S. Srinivasan
Patrick Sr. Onge
Robert Sr. Pierre
Alex Stansell
Wayne & Theresa Stanton
Charles & Joan Staples
Robert Steinl L
Bruce & Barbara Stelle M
Daniel & Stephanie Stepanauskas V
Kathy & Dick Stewart
Theo & Melanie Stibbons
Stonehurst Manor
David Sweet
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Swezonsen
Mark & Hampton Synnott
The Tarberry Company, LLC
Richard & Caroline Taylor
Bruce & Debra Taylor
Ms. Emily Taylor V
Joanne Taylor deKay
Chris Lubicz-Nawrocki & Mary Ten Broeke
Linda & Bill Terry
The Nature Conservancy L
Ms. Kate Thompson
Charles & Alisa Thorne L
Muffy Thorne L
Virginia Thorne L
Daivd & Judy Thurlow
Tin Mountain Conservation Center L
Town of Albany L
Town of Eaton L
Sasha & Jack Tracy V
Curly Trumman
Ms. Edith Tucker
Tuckerman Brewing Company
James Turitto
Jim & Karen Umerber
Valley Resale
Kathleen Van Deursen
Dick & Shirly Van Dyne
Kathy & Dave Van Not M
Ed & Zoe Veasye
Michael & Donna Veilleux
Dennis & Johanna Vienneau
Vintage Frameworks
David Vitale-Wolf
B. Grennan & F. Von Ulmer
Mr. Wyatt Wade
Dr. Patricia Walker
Hilary Wallis
Richard & Sally Ward
Shirley Ward
Helen & Jim Wesco
Norma Waskell
June Meavey & Michael Weeder
Tish Hanlon & Stephen Weeder
Dr. Harvey & Valerie Weener
Lou & Margaret Wells
Ms. Frances West
John Weston L
George & Laurie Wroblewski
Linda & David Wroblewski
Lori & Margaret Zack
Mark Zagara
Robert & Angela Zakon
Dr. Daniel Burke & Mrs. Linda Zembsch
Jane M. L."Linda Zych

IN HONOR OF/ IN MEMORY OF

In Memory of Barbara Bannon
Mr. Michael Bannon
In Memory of Jim Cobbs
Judith Fowler
Willis H. Williams
In Honor of Martha Cobbs
Helen & Bruce Dixon
In Honor of Linda Comeau
Allan Aldrich
In Honor of Andy Davis & Andrea Walsh
Mrs. Eleanor Jenkins
In Honor of Mark Dindorf
Anonymous (2)
In Honor of Larry Garland
Leane Page Garland
Marc Garland
In Memory of My Grandmothers

White Birch Books
Mr. Robert A. & Anne Whitten
John & Ann Wilcox
Ms. Jennifer Wiley
Janet & Freddie Wilkinson
David & Carolyn Williams
Martha Dupuis & Gary Williams
Dorothy Williams/Hesketh
Roy Willis L
Mr. Alan Wilson
Windover Farm
Winona Camps
Marita & Bob Wiser
Gretchin Witman
Mr. Edward Wolcott
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Woodman Jr.
Meg Worcester L
David & Jeanne Wright
Marvin Wright
Courtney & James Wrigley
Colin & Meredith Wroblewski
Ted & Sharon Wroblewski
Linda & Heinrich Wurm
Peter & Margaret Zack
Mark Zagara
Robert & Angela Zakon
Dr. Daniel Burke & Mrs. Linda Zembsch
Jane M. L."Linda Zych

IN HONOR OF/ IN MEMORY OF

In Memory of Barbara Bannon
Mr. Michael Bannon
In Memory of Jim Cobbs
Judith Fowler
Willis H. Williams
In Honor of Martha Cobbs
Helen & Bruce Dixon
In Honor of Linda Comeau
Allan Aldrich
In Honor of Andy Davis & Andrea Walsh
Mrs. Eleanor Jenkins
In Honor of Mark Dindorf
Anonymous (2)
In Honor of Larry Garland
Leane Page Garland
Marc Garland
In Memory of My Grandmothers

White Birch Books
Mr. Robert A. & Anne Whitten
John & Ann Wilcox
Ms. Jennifer Wiley
Janet & Freddie Wilkinson
David & Carolyn Williams
Martha Dupuis & Gary Williams
Dorothy Williams/Hesketh
Roy Willis L
Mr. Alan Wilson
Windover Farm
Winona Camps
Marita & Bob Wiser
Gretchin Witman
Mr. Edward Wolcott
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Woodman Jr.
Meg Worcester L
David & Jeanne Wright
Marvin Wright
Courtney & James Wrigley
Colin & Meredith Wroblewski
Ted & Sharon Wroblewski
Linda & Heinrich Wurm
Peter & Margaret Zack
Mark Zagara
Robert & Angela Zakon
Dr. Daniel Burke & Mrs. Linda Zembsch
Jane M. L."Linda Zych

IN HONOR OF/ IN MEMORY OF

In Memory of Barbara Bannon
Mr. Michael Bannon
In Memory of Jim Cobbs
Judith Fowler
Willis H. Williams
In Honor of Martha Cobbs
Helen & Bruce Dixon
In Honor of Linda Comeau
Allan Aldrich
In Honor of Andy Davis & Andrea Walsh
Mrs. Eleanor Jenkins
In Honor of Mark Dindorf
Anonymous (2)
In Honor of Larry Garland
Leane Page Garland
Marc Garland
In Memory of My Grandmothers

ART CELEBRATES PLACE
At the close of 2018, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust and our partners had completed 68 conservation projects, totaling nearly 12,000 acres throughout our 11-town service area. Please see www.usvlt.org for more detailed location information about these easements and preserves.
The year ending December 31, 2018, was very successful. Although USVLT projected that tax-law changes might result in reduced membership support, the opposite was true. Members were extremely generous, underwriting our continued growth. Those donations allowed for increases in our financial reserves, which will support the organization in the event of an economic downturn, help insure easement terms are met, and attract and retain qualified staff.

Highlights included:
- Celebrating the highest membership support in the organization’s history, thanks to new members joining and existing members increasing their donation level,
- Successfully completing significant land-protection projects and securing long-term stewardship funding for these acquisitions,
- Acquiring the Pine Hill Community Forest, the organization’s most ambitious land project to date,
- Attaining financial strength sufficient to support more than three full-time equivalent staff, which will foster long-term viability through increased focus on development and diversification of skillsets, and
- Significantly increasing cash reserves to allow the Land Trust to continue its mission even in the event of a down turn in the economy.

For the Land Trust to carry out its mission, the support of members and the local community is essential. Membership donations underwrite operating costs, and 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 14% of total income in 2018, it accounts for an impressive 42% of “operating income” that is not tied to a specific land project. Thank you.*