

U P P E R
S A C O
V A L L E Y
L A N D
T R U S T

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



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.

USVLT serves northern Carroll and western Oxford counties, including the communities of Bartlett, Jackson, Hart's Location, Conway, Albany, Madison, Eaton, Chatham, Fryeburg, Brownfield, and Denmark.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Doug Burnell

Although proudly presenting you—in our first annual report—with tales of our past year’s accomplishments, USVLT is continually looking ahead to how best accomplish our mission of preserving land for community benefit.

Ours is a wonderfully diverse area, beloved for its mix of majestic mountains and fertile valleys, high-quality outdoor recreation and stunning scenery, clear headwaters and abundant aquifers. In fact, the upper Saco Valley has been identified as possessing those natural attributes most resilient to big change, especially the climatic type we increasingly seem to be experiencing. Keeping our little pocket of resiliency as varied and vibrant as possible is key to our health and happiness as its human inhabitants and visiting admirers.

As such, USVLT strives to play a leading role in our community, seeking out partnerships and commonalities in spite of differences perceived through instinctive tribal tendencies, to preserve what we all value from slightly different perspectives. Our collaboration with The Nature Conservancy on their Grow Green Hills project, which will add over two square miles onto the existing preserve, is a case in point. When connected to other lands conserved by Tin Mountain Conservation Center, the Society for Protection of NH Forests, the Conway Conservation Commission, the State of NH, the White Mountain National Forest, and USVLT, a block of regional significance to watershed protection, wildlife connectivity, diverse plant communities, and multi-use recreation is being developed, collectively.



Your support of our common cause—be it as an outdoor recreationist, settled resident, Valley business, occasional or frequent visitor—is not only vital but both rewarding to you and greatly appreciated by your fellow community members.

Doug Burnell



LAND ACQUISITION

OVERVIEW

Conservation should be strategic. In USVLT's work, it is. Each one of our 2013 acquisitions builds on a network of conserved lands, adding acreage to what biologists call "habitat blocks" or creating "linkages" between existing conserved areas.

Doug Burnell, in his President's letter, addresses some of the challenges facing us, and touches on *resiliency science* and its impact in our work. As climatic shifts become reality, conservationists are "hedging." We don't know what challenges climate change will bring—how severe the weather will be in 20 years or 120 years—but we do know that Upper Saco Valley Land Trust's service area is a comparatively resilient landscape, based on recent reports from The Nature Conservancy and the Open Space Institute. Our challenge is therefore how to use this science to its best effect. Our vision is that of a connected, resilient landscape, which will provide security in the face of unknown challenges.

Each of our 2013 acquisitions is part of this vision. We begin 2014 with 11 projects in process, covering almost every town in our service area. All of these projects are a step toward a resilient and connected landscape, in which the conservation values being protected are amplified. Moreover, such strategic projects are an excellent return on the investment donors and members have made in our work. We look forward to sharing these successes with you in the next few years, and we offer profound thanks to the donors and members that fuel such successes.

2013 ACQUISITIONS



Doug Burnell photo

SANDQUIST FEE DONATION IN JACKSON

The heirs of Eric G. Sandquist donated this 22-acre parcel to USVLT. The property has 1600 feet of frontage on the Wildcat River—one of only two federally designated Wild & Scenic Rivers in New Hampshire—and contains intact floodplain forest with historic flood channels and excel-

lent wildlife habitat. The property borders the Wildcat River on the west and is surrounded by 215 additional acres of conserved land held by the Wildcat River Trust.

MOOSE POND BROOK “EXTENSION” IN DENMARK

Adding to the 1,386-acre Moose Pond Brook conservation easement acquired by USVLT in 2012, the new owners of the property, Howard and Penny Burt, donated an additional 41 acres of abutting land that they also owned. This second, smaller easement preserved much of the undeveloped road frontage along Bull Ring Road in Denmark.



Linda Comeau photo

DUNDEE CONSERVATION EASEMENT IN JACKSON

This 236.9-acre conservation easement, adjacent to a 495-acre New England Forestry Foundation property and the White Mountain National Forest, was gifted to USVLT by the descendants and relatives of Maxwell and Elizabeth Foster: Maxwell E. Foster, Jr., Colleen Curran, Joel Horn and Susan McGrath. While mostly wooded, the property also features 16 acres of grassland, identified as a critical habitat type by the NH Wildlife Action Plan, and wetlands (3 acres), including nearly a mile of river frontage along the East Branch of the Saco River.



EDUCATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2013, our education program was *active*. As Nels Liljedahl describes on the facing page, the launch of our new “Easement Exploration Series” was a great success, and, simply put, an awful lot of fun. USVLT intends to build on this initial year, and continue to offer our Easement Exploration Series in 2014 and beyond. To sign up, please call the office at 603-356-9683 or email info@usvlt.org.

In addition to outings on easement land, we also hosted:

- The Naturally Adventurous Film Festival at Attitash Grand Summit in February, with films for both adults and general audience that were selections from the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival.
- A municipal Multi-Town Meeting at Fryeburg Academy in May, in which community leaders from all 11 towns we serve came together with a common cause of creating a strategic conservation plan that incorporated their towns’ own conservation and civic priorities.
- An amazing 3D nature photography slideshow in July, co-hosted by the Greater Lovell Land Trust, which celebrated Roger Richmond’s award-winning and captivating images.

Other presentations and get-togethers included sharing the results of the organization’s build-out analysis, commissioned in part by the Towns of Eaton and Conway (more information available on our website), and participation in the annual Maine Land Trust Network conference, during which William Abbott presented results from our strategic conservation work.

All education and outreach work in 2013 had a common purpose: to foster a deeper understanding of, connection to, and appreciation for the natural world. All were, again, an awful lot of fun. We hope to see you at a 2014 land trust event soon!





EASEMENT EXPLORATION SERIES

Nels Liljedahl

USVLT transformed these three special words into a big hit last year. With something wonderful for everyone, members and the community were guided by natural resource specialists who introduced us to unique USVLT-conserved properties, and used those properties as opportunities to discuss environmental topics.

- In March, we snowshoed on the Osgood and Burnell forests in Kearsarge learning about winter tree identification from Wink Lees and William Abbott.
- In June, we learned about invasive plants on the Kennett Farm in North Conway. Amanda Devine taught us how to deal with these nasty plants, including killing, cooking, and eating them!
- At the Earle Family Farm, Tom Earle showed us innovative techniques he uses to enhance soil quality. Participants left with a new appreciation for the experimentation, science, and complexities that face modern-day small farmers.
- Paddling with Rick Van de Poll on Conway Lake, we learned about the intricacies of evaluating water quality while viewing conserved areas and visiting Long Island, which is owned by USVLT.
- On the Saco River in September, Matt Tarr taught us about the endangered Silver Maple Floodplains that are pristine and plentiful on Elbridge Russell's property.
- Mike Cline discussed sustainable forestry on Tin Mountain property in Center Conway. Discovering raptor nests and a bear den was an extra bonus!

A common theme in these events was the interaction of the participants, landowners, and presenters appreciating nature, sharing knowledge, and working together to ensure that others in the future have similar experiences as we had on those glorious days.

STEWARDSHIP OVERVIEW

At the close of 2013, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust owned eight fee properties and held conservation easements on 40 more, with total acreage over 7,650. That's a tremendous conservation success story; it's also a lot of land where a mattress can be dumped, where timber trespass can occur, where bootlegged trails can be built. Some monitoring challenges are relatively easy to resolve, others present more intractable issues: riverbank erosion washing away prime agricultural soils, the inevitable creep of non-native invasive plant species, the decline of a rare population we're trying to protect. It's a lot of work, and we depend on volunteer monitors to help ensure that the resources we're charged with protecting are, in fact, protected.

Frank Balantic is one of those monitors to whom we are indebted. He monitors over 750 acres in South Conway, including Long Island. His love of the land is embodied in his writing on the facing page.

USVLT's long-term stewardship of fee properties, as well as a large number of its easements, also involves writing management plans that help direct everyday activity onsite. In 2013, five such management plans were written. For these properties, our ownership was just the first step in their long-term protection; investing in these management plans helps ensure that the conservation values are not eroded over time.

As our number of properties grows, so does the need for more volunteer monitors! Please let us know if you're interested by calling 603-356-9683 or emailing info@usvlt.org. Training occurs in late May or early June, and includes basic map and compass skills, an overview of surveying techniques, and tips on how to interpret easement terms.





STEWARDSHIP

FOR THE FUTURE

Frank Balantic

Although we are residents of coastal Connecticut, the upper Saco Valley has been a special place for us since 1988. Our young family was drawn to the many unblemished, untrampled, and undeveloped places—places that sustain the health of the region, places to be preserved. Eventually Lori and I were able to buy a camp on Conway Lake and are now summertime residents.

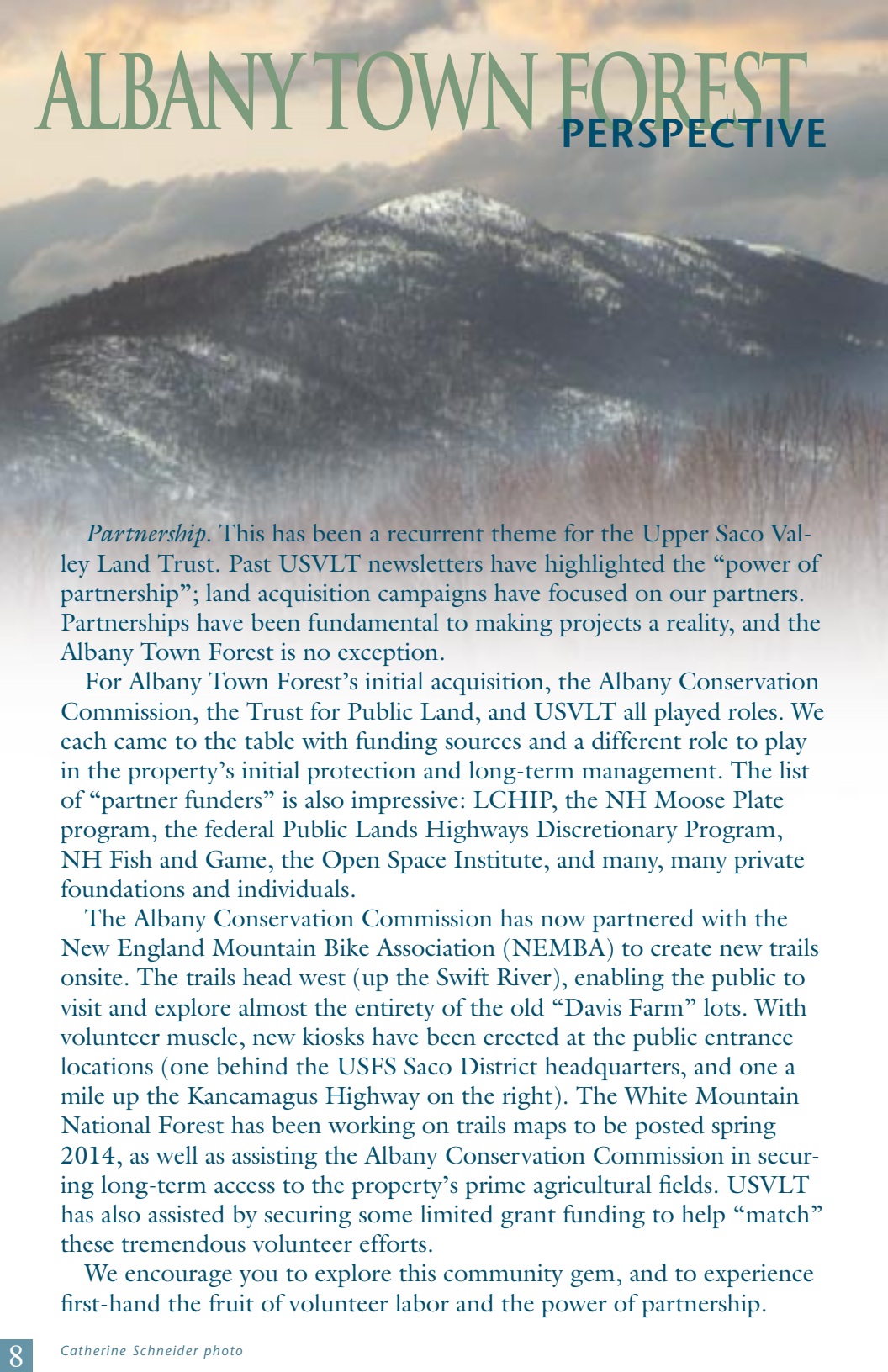
Hearing about USVLT and its mission 10 years ago, we immediately enrolled as members. We found it impressive how quickly USVLT was protecting properties with the proactive and visionary support of so many landowners. About five years ago, a USVLT newsletter article invited members to serve as “land monitors,” folks who could commit to annually walking the various parcels, and insuring that the terms and spirit of “land in trust” are honored. I currently serve as monitor for the over 750-acre historic property put in trust by Thad and Ginny Thorne, as well as four-acre Long Island in Conway Lake.

The island is fairly pristine and quiet, sometimes visited by boaters and picnickers. It is a respite for many bird species foraging on huckleberries and blueberries; for pileated woodpeckers seeking a meal of carpenter ants or grubs; for beaver dragging off hardwood saplings; and for the occasional bald eagle perched atop a 150-year-old white pine scanning the lake for opportunity.

I visit the island a few times every summer and focus one visit as a monitor. I snap a few pictures and write a brief report that generally details the beer can, empty night-crawler cup, and pair of shorts (don’t ask) that I pack out. This island is a treasure and it is wonderful that the owner had the foresight to entrust it to USVLT.

ALBANY TOWN FOREST

PERSPECTIVE



Partnership. This has been a recurrent theme for the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust. Past USVLT newsletters have highlighted the “power of partnership”; land acquisition campaigns have focused on our partners. Partnerships have been fundamental to making projects a reality, and the Albany Town Forest is no exception.

For Albany Town Forest’s initial acquisition, the Albany Conservation Commission, the Trust for Public Land, and USVLT all played roles. We each came to the table with funding sources and a different role to play in the property’s initial protection and long-term management. The list of “partner funders” is also impressive: LCHIP, the NH Moose Plate program, the federal Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program, NH Fish and Game, the Open Space Institute, and many, many private foundations and individuals.

The Albany Conservation Commission has now partnered with the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) to create new trails onsite. The trails head west (up the Swift River), enabling the public to visit and explore almost the entirety of the old “Davis Farm” lots. With volunteer muscle, new kiosks have been erected at the public entrance locations (one behind the USFS Saco District headquarters, and one a mile up the Kancamagus Highway on the right). The White Mountain National Forest has been working on trails maps to be posted spring 2014, as well as assisting the Albany Conservation Commission in securing long-term access to the property’s prime agricultural fields. USVLT has also assisted by securing some limited grant funding to help “match” these tremendous volunteer efforts.

We encourage you to explore this community gem, and to experience first-hand the fruit of volunteer labor and the power of partnership.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

William Abbott

Dear Community Member,

2013 witnessed tremendous growth for the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust. With your support, we were able to:

- Bring the total amount of conserved land in our care to 7,650 acres across 48 properties.
- Engage our communities in a deeper appreciation of the natural world through our educational programming, including the newly launched Easement Exploration Series.
- Create a strategic framework for additional land acquisition that uses the best research available, from recent “resiliency science” spear-headed by The Nature Conservancy to the results of our 2011 Natural Resource Inventory.
- Engage with our area communities to understand their priorities for conservation through our strategic conservation planning effort and our Multi-Town Meeting held in May.
- Retool how we stay in touch through a redesigned website, member email notifications, and Facebook.
- Help bring local food to our local communities by serving as fiscal agent for the newly launched North Conway Farmers’ Market.
- Raise the most amount of money *ever* in any one year for land protection projects.
- Navigate the maze of federal grant requirements for our Weston’s Rivercroft Farm project and shepherd successful completion of its fundraising goal.
- Tap into new sources of government funding and foundation support for many projects in the “pipeline.”
- Complete our first formal financial audit, which confirmed that 97.5% of our income went directly toward land protection in 2012.



Above all, we demonstrated to you, our supporters, that we are a good investment. For the sake of our future, and our children and grandchildren’s future, we hope that you will continue to invest in our work in the years to come. Thank you for your support.

William B. Abbott

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Martha & Jim Cobbs
by Helen & Bruce Dixon
Richard Margolis
by Mr. Thomas E. Gerson
Jon Marquis
by Bette Ann & Joseph E. Marquis

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF:

Carol & Brad Boynton
by Mrs. Charlotte F. Brown
Carol & Brad Boynton
by Mr. & Mrs. James Cobbs
Carol & Brad Boynton
by Don & Edith Dashnau
Carol & Brad Boynton
by Chester B. & Lydia T. Lucy
Carol & Brad Boynton by Dr.
Richard & September Neville
Carol & Brad Boynton

by Sarah & David M. Nix
Carol & Brad Boynton
by Mrs. John C. Rogers
John Brooks
by Mr. Christopher Brooks
Mary Patricia Gospodarek
by Doug & Kathy Burnell
Mary Patricia Gospodarek
by Memorial Hospital
Mary Patricia Gospodarek
by Riverbend School
Farish A. Jenkins, Jr.
by his wife Eleanor T. Jenkins
Don Kibbee
by David & Carolyn Williams
Duncan Kimball
by Mr. Christopher Baldwin
Duncan Kimball
by Dudley & Ann Baldwin
Beverly Klitsch
by John & Patricia Dunn
Beverly Klitsch by Ms. Gail Ferreira
Beverly Klitsch by Deidre Sheedy
& Leonard Haley
Beverly Klitsch
by David & Jeanne Mason
Lauren McClellan
by David & Carolyn Williams
Robert Anderson Miller
by Mr. Robert W. Osgood



CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

STEWARDSHIP ENDOWMENT

Dr. & Mrs. Howard Burt
Colleen Curran & Maxwell E.
Foster, Jr.
Joel Horn & Susan McGrath

WESTON'S RIVERCROFT FARM (FOUNDATIONS)

An Anonymous Foundation
Davis Conservation Foundation
Donaldson Charitable Trust
Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
Evenor Armington Fund
Kendal C. & Anna Ham
Charitable Foundation
Maine Farmland Trust
Mr. & Mrs. Norman McCulloch, Jr.,
Trustees of the McAdams
Charitable Foundation

The NH Charitable Foundation:
Stanton & Elisabeth Davis Fund
Thomas W. Haas Fund
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service–
FRPP Program

WESTON'S RIVERCROFT FARM (INDIVIDUALS)

David Paige & William Abbott
Mr. Allan Aldrich
Ms. Patricia M. Amaral
Ms. RoseAnn Amari
Anonymous (2)
Ms. Tracey Bentley
William & Margaret Bernhardt
Candis & Scott Bolden
E. Allen & Joanne Denike Brooks
Browning Valuation Services, Inc.
Dr. & Mrs. Howard Burt

Steve & Lois Caffrey & Family
Mr. Leon Xavier Carson
Dr. & Mrs. David Cohen
Tara Taylor & T.O. Currier
Tom & Ruth Earle
Mr. Peter B. Edwards
Mr. Steven J Formisani
Betty Fuller
Mr. Larry Garland
Fritz von Ulmer & Brian Grennan
Lucy Gatchell & Dexter Harding
Sam & Betsey Harding
Jim & Linda Hastings
Peter & Stefi Reed Hastings
HEB Engineers
Ms. Dorothy E Hender
Mr. Doug Hjelmstad
John & Patricia Hoffman
Mr. Scott Hutchins
Kay Leigh & Andrew Kearns

CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

(continued)

WESTON'S RIVERCROFT FARM (INDIVIDUALS)

(continued)

Jeff & Susan Lathrop
The Lloyd Family
Kristen & David McDermott
Robert & Kathleen Metz
Meg & David Murphy
Ms. Susan Nichols
R & R Woodworkers
Ms. Halorie Thorne Rintel
Jean & John Roccio
Mrs. Marilyn Rodes
Mrs. John C. Rogers
Betsy & Drew Smith
Mrs. Elenor C. Smith
Wayne A. Stanton &
Theresa L. Stanton
Mr. Robert D. Stearns
Mr. David Sweet
Harold & Evelyn Thorne
Ms. Miriam D. Tod
Ms. Donna Urey
John Bruni & DD Warren
Ms. Frances C. West
Mr. Edward O. Wolcott
Mr. David F. Wood
Ms. Lucy Robb Works
Weston Family
Wyonegonic Camps

PERLEY MILLS COMMUNITY FOREST (in support of Loon Echo Land Trust)

Anonymous (10)
Lori & Frank Balantic
Ms. Agnes R. Birch
Albert & Phyllis Breeden
Mrs. Charlotte E. Brown

Mr. Ed Bruenjes
Ms. Nancy E. Burns
Dr. & Mrs. Howard Burt
John P. & Martha W. Chandler
Mr. Alec M. Choremi
Tara Taylor & T.O. Currier
Don & Edith Dashnau
Curt & Cindi Detzer
Mr. Christopher Doucette
Dave & Noreen Downs
Jim & Jean Drummond
John & Patricia Dunn
Richard & Alison Earle
Mr. Peter B. Edwards
Roderick & Susan Forsman
Mr. Larry Garland
Mr. Doug Hjelmstad
Valerie & Berthold Horn
Mr. Robert Koppe
Jeff & Susan Lathrop
Vic & Janna Levesque
Mr. William J. Lewis, Jr.
Lewis & Rosemary Lloyd
Ms. Janice Lord
Mrs. William C. Loring
Mr. Barrett R. Lucas
Maple Leaf Motel
Virginia Ward & Brad McKenzie
Ms. Charlene O'Brien
PDM, Inc.
Meredith & Steve Piotrow
Kenneth & Jane Rancourt
Ms. Jay Rancourt
Ms. Halorie Thorne Rintel
Mrs. John C. Rogers
Edward S. Rogerson
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Rose
Richard & Debra Samia
Mr. Burgess Smith
Ron & Kim Smith
Mrs. Elenor C. Smith

Dan & Molly Sperduto
Stonehurst Manor
Mr. David Sweet
Ms. Emily Taylor
Kate T. Thompson
Dr. Charles Thorne
Harold & Evelyn Thorne
Ms. Linda Turcotte
Johanna & Dennis Vienneau
Mr. & Mrs. Byron E. Woodman, Jr.
Wyonegonic Camps
Anne C. Chase & Ron Zager

NORTH CONWAY FARMERS' MARKET

Mr. Rob Adair
Eileen Conway
Curt & Cindi Detzer
Mr. Gabriel Flanders
Flatbread Company
Mr. T. Scott Gamwell
Jim Surette & Sarah Garlick
Mr. Randy Guida
Charles & Maureen Hanlon
Nicholas & Emmy Hudson-Swogger
Judy & Dan Kennedy
Mr. Karl Nordlund
Ms. Alicia Ogawa
Mark & Teresa Richey
Riverside Inn
Christine & George Robertson
Rotary Club of North Conway
Nickie Sekera
Deb & Richard Sincere
Bayard Russell & Ann Skidmore
Valley Originals
Janet & Freddie Wilkinson





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Doug Burnell, Conway

Vice-President: Tom Henderson, Madison

Secretary: Cynthia Briggs, North Conway

Treasurer: Jim Hastings, Bartlett

STAFF

William Abbott
Executive Director

Linda Comeau
Land Protection Specialist

Ann Bennett, Jackson
Jim Doucette, Conway
Tom Earle, South Conway
Jill Flint-Barber, North Conway
(through April 2013)
Sarah Garlick, North Conway
Tom Gross, South Conway
Dexter Harding, Jackson
Stefan Jackson, Bridgton
Wendell Lees, Kearsarge
Christopher Meier, Conway
Mona Pinette, Center Conway/
Exeter, (since May 2013)
Burgess Smith, Brownfield
David Thurlow (Honorary)



Linda Comeau photos

SUMMER INTERNS

Caleb T. Corliss
Wesleyan University

Henney Sullivan
Harvard University



FINANCIAL REPORT

(Year Ended December 31, 2013 — Unaudited)

COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

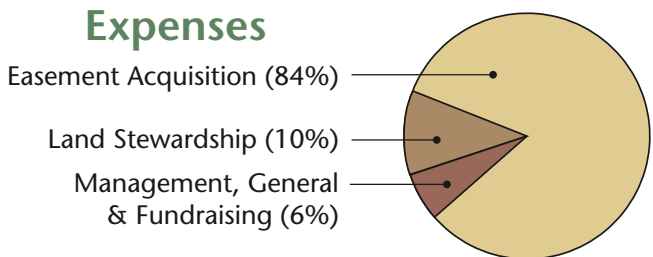
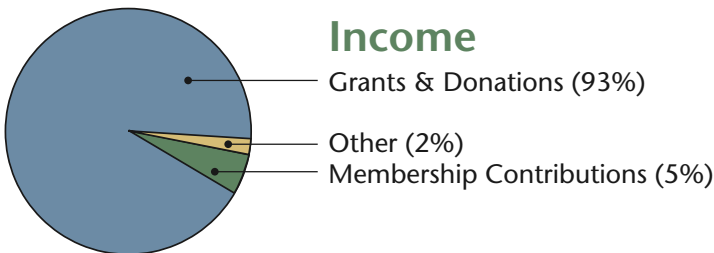
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUE:			
Membership Contributions	\$ 37,595	\$ -	\$ 37,595
Grants and Donations	57,544	707,490	765,034
Other	15,419	-	15,419
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	471,382	(471,382)	0
Total Revenue	581,940	236,108	818,048
EXPENSES:			
Program Services:			
Easement Acquisition	\$ 491,744	\$ -	\$ 491,744
Land Stewardship	61,851	-	61,851
Total Program Services	553,594	0	553,594
Management and General	32,809	-	32,809
Fundraising	1,827	-	1,827
Total Expenses	588,230	0	588,230
Change in Net Assets	\$ (6,290)	\$ 236,108	229,818

COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
ASSETS:				
Cash, Unrestricted	\$ 108,321	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 108,321
Cash, Restricted	-	401,012	-	401,012
Prepaid Expenses	1,308	-	-	1,308
Beneficial Interest Held by Others	-	-	153,586	153,586
Property & Equipment, net	1,916	-	-	1,916
Land & Conservation Easements	-	-	1,106,360	1,106,360
Deposits	500	-	-	500
Total Assets	\$ 112,045	\$ 401,012	\$ 1,259,946	\$ 1,773,003
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:				
Accrued Expenses	\$ 10,395	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,395
Net Assets	101,650	401,012	1,259,946	1,762,608
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 112,045	\$ 401,012	\$ 1,259,946	\$ 1,773,003

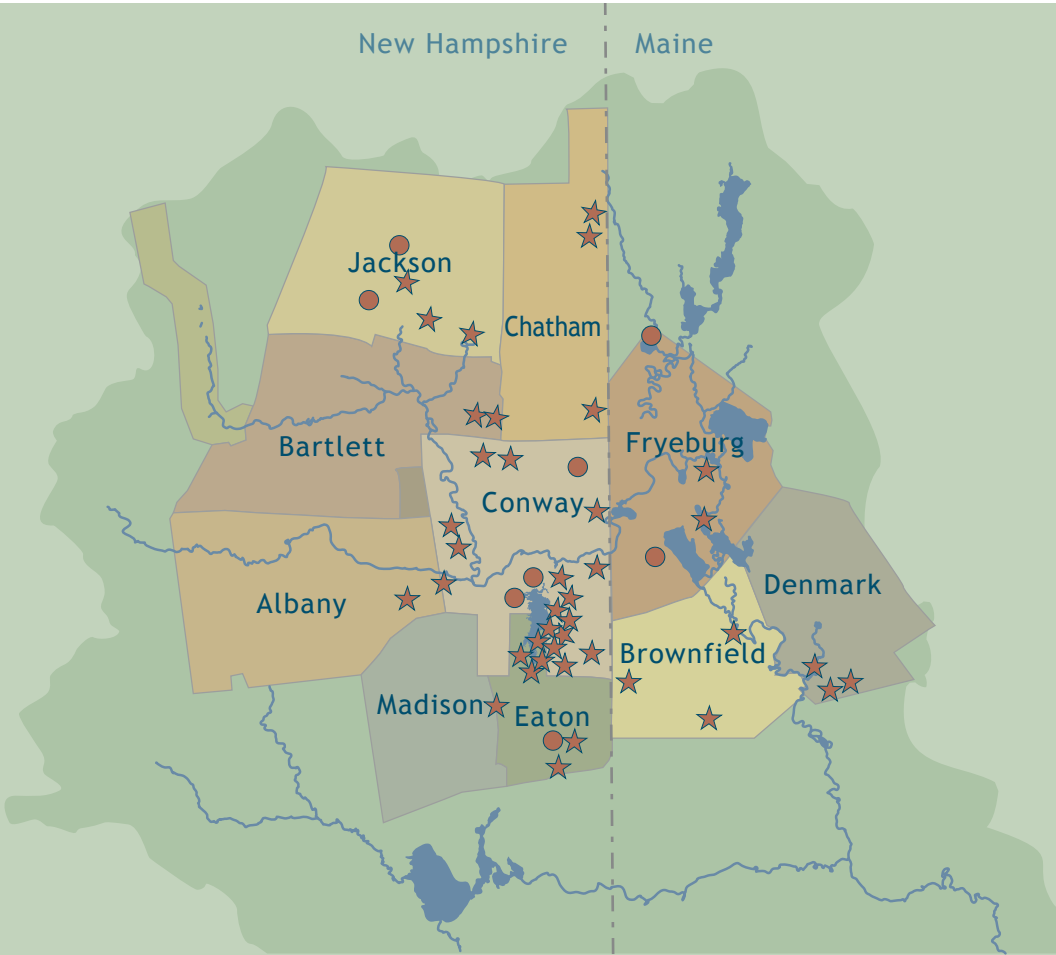
Unrestricted funds may be used for operations. Temporarily restricted funds are grant funds or donations earmarked for a specific project or purpose to be used in future years. Permanently restricted assets include land, conservation easements, and our stewardship endowment.

Thanks to the generosity of its members and contributors, a focus on project-specific grant funding, and conservative management, The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is in a solid financial position. During the difficult economic environment in recent years, USVLT has successfully funded special projects like Foss Mountain, the Albany Town Forest and, most recently Weston's Rivercroft Farm. Targeted campaigns for special projects have somewhat limited fundraising for operations, resulting in operating expenses slightly exceeding operating income. USVLT has built cash reserves that allow it to function on a short-term basis in times of economic downturns. In addition, the organization is committed to building an endowment to assist in funding its on-going operations. In 2013 the endowment, which is professionally managed by the Maine Community Foundation, had a net increase of nearly \$22,000 and now has over \$150,000 in assets. Continued support from members and contributors is key to USVLT's on-going protection and stewardship efforts. For more detailed financial information please go to www.guidestar.com or contact USVLT.





PARTNERSHIPS FOR LAND PROTECTION



CONSERVATION EASEMENTS



LAND IN FEE



Preserving Land for Community Benefit

PO Box 424, North Conway NH 03860
(603) 356-9683 • info@usvlt.org
www.usvlt.org

At the close of 2013, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust had acquired 40 conservation easements and 8 lands in fee permanently protecting 7,650 acres. Please see www.usvlt.org for more detailed location information for these easements and preserves.