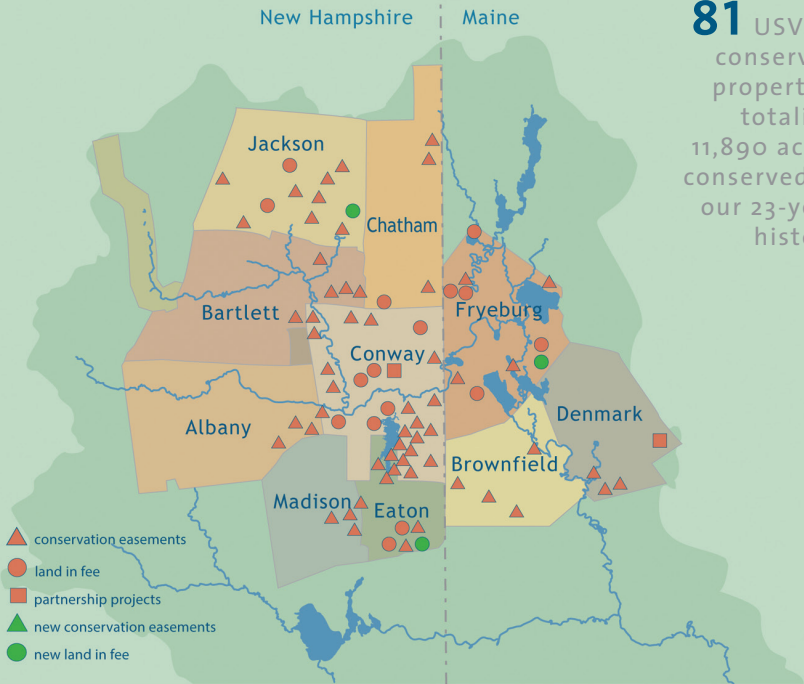




Preserving Land for Community Benefit

Jerry Monkman/EcoPhotography/courtesy of the Trust for Public Land

IMPACT REPORT 2023



81 USVLT-
conserved
properties
totaling
11,890 acres
conserved in
our 23-year
history

COMMUNITY & CONSERVATION

People are at the heart of what we do at USVLT. Fundamentally, each one of our conservation achievements comes back to the people who help make it happen. We depend on landowners who have the vision and generosity to contribute concretely to conservation by entering into conservation easements, making outright gifts of land, or offering land for sale to USVLT rather than on the open market. We depend on individual supporters who strengthen our work with financial gifts. Business owners throughout the Mount Washington Valley and Western Maine are important partners in conservation who support our mission with financial and in-kind gifts. Our staff work long hours, wear multiple hats, and juggle myriad demands on their time. And our incredible volunteers expand our capacity, helping in every aspect of our work.

In return, everything we do is focused on returning good to our community. We hope that in 2023 you got to experience for yourself some aspect of what USVLT makes possible, whether it was birdwatching at Pequawket Pond, mountain biking at Pine Hill Community Forest, kayaking along the wild shoreline of the southern part of Conway Lake, sipping a Great Brook Stout made from the pristine waters originating in the Dundee Community Forest, cutting your own Christmas tree at Weston's or Chamberlain Farm, skiing or snowshoeing on trails protected by USVLT easements at Jackson Ski Touring Center, or something that is uniquely your own.

Thank you for partnering with us.

Doug Burnell, Board President

Lindsay Kafka, Board Vice President



“Permanent conservation is the most effective means to secure the many values that forestland provides.”
 – 2020 New Hampshire Forest Action Plan

A DREAM COME TRUE

Photo Lindsay Kafka



DUNDEE COMMUNITY FOREST

Jackson/Bartlett, New Hampshire

After a years’ long herculean effort, in July 2023, USVLT formally acquired ownership of 1,250 acres of mountainside and valley bottom land along Dundee Road on the border of Jackson and Bartlett, now known as the Dundee Community Forest. This acquisition involved coordination between USVLT, the Beal Family (the sellers), numerous national and state agencies and programs, including the Trust for Public Land, the United States Forest Service, and the State of New Hampshire. It also hinged on popular support – countless individuals and families came forward with gifts of treasure to help the project succeed.

USVLT is grateful to William “Mack” Beal and his family for their conservation vision and generosity. Mr. Beal, who lived in Jackson, was trained as a forester and surveyor, and had the long-term vision and patience to gradually assemble 17 parcels of land over 60 years, carefully stewarding those lands during his lifetime

and keeping them open for hiking, hunting, and cross-country skiing.

Dundee Community Forest will be managed for recreation, sustainable forestry and drinking water protection, with the Dundee Community Forest Advisory Committee overseeing this work.

In early October, USVLT hosted a festive evening at Ledge Brewing Company in Intervale featuring live music, remarks from stakeholders, tacos and a special-edition beer that got its name - Great Brook Stout - from a mountain stream that runs through the northern part of the forest. As Ian Ferguson, co-owner of Ledge Brewing, says: “Great water makes great beer, so it only makes sense to celebrate the protection of our watershed.”

To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/conserved-lands/dundee_community_forest/37

MORE OF A GOOD THING

EATON HILLS PRESERVE Eaton, New Hampshire

How many of us have enjoyed the short hike to the top of Foss Mountain in Eaton to pick blueberries or take in the 360-degree view at the top, east into Maine, and north, west and south across twinkling Conway, Silver and Ossipee Lakes? Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, the conservation “collar” around beloved Foss Mountain was expanded in late 2023 by 165 acres of forested land situated between Stewart and Foss Mountain Roads. Now known as the Eaton Hills Preserve, this acquisition is notable for adding to a large contiguous block of protected land that includes several USVLT conservation easements and preserves, as well as Eaton Town Forest and conservation easements held by Green Mountain Conservation Group.

The Eaton Hills Preserve is crisscrossed with rambling stonewalls that testify to the hardscrabble farming of the 19th century. Further testimony of this agricultural history appears along the steep cart path that links the two town roads, where a tall stone wall shores up the downhill side of a two-bay cellar hole and a tiny burying ground that hosts the graves of three Stuart-family infants – all on a terrace affording a spectacular, panoramic view of the White Mountains.

To learn more, please visit our website at usvlt.org/conserved-lands/eaton_hills_preserve/37

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”
– Rachel Carson



Staff Photo



Photo Lindsay Kafka

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

 NEW MULTI-USE TRAILS AT
PINE HILL COMMUNITY FOREST
North Conway, New Hampshire

Located on the edge of North Conway’s commercial district – and tucked between Kennett High School, Mineral Springs Nursing Home, and Northeast Woodland School – is a hidden green jewel, the 594-acre Pine Hill Community Forest. Originally mostly owned by the Kennett Company, the bulk of this large parcel was acquired by USVLT in 2018, with a significant expansion occurring in 2022.

A focus of USVLT’s stewardship at Pine Hill has been trail restoration and construction, with Matt Coughlan of Recon Trail Design taking the lead across multiple projects since 2018. Matt was supported in his trail work by volunteers from White Mountain New England Mountain Bike Association, the Kennett High School mountain-biking team, and AmeriCorps. Rob Adair and Mike

Simoneau from WMNEMBA, USVLT former Land Steward Greg Bjork, and USVLT board president Doug Burnell were also particularly generous with their time and sweat equity.

Pine Hill Community Forest now boasts several multi-use trails, including a 3-mile loop that serves as the new home trail for the Kennett High School mountain bike team. The Pine Hill trails are also open to the community for walking, running, biking, and snowshoeing. Since 2023 also saw the construction of a new parking lot on Eagle’s Way, there is even a spot for folks to stash their car while out enjoying the trails at Pine Hill.

To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/conserved-lands/pine_hill_community_forest/37

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

POCKET SWAMP PRESERVE East Fryeburg, Maine

In 2023, Deacon Chadbourne Preserve expanded by thirty acres and was renamed Pocket Swamp Preserve, in recognition of part of its area being designated by the State of Maine Natural Areas Program as a rare and imperiled Hemlock-Hardwood Pocket Swamp. The swamp is home to ancient black gum trees, here growing at their northernmost extreme in Maine. Pocket Swamp Preserve now consists of 48 acres of forested upland and forested wetlands (including a softwood forest community) on the north side of Route 302 in East Fryeburg, Maine. The Preserve is part of a nearly 1500-acre unfragmented block, including, on its western edge, The Nature Conservancy's 600-acre Mt. Tom Preserve. USVLT honors Arizona Zipper for making this remaining part of his family's property available for conservation, shortly before his death.



Pocket Swamp Preserve is home to native black gum (tupelo) trees. Black bears, fox and fowl like to eat black gum fruit, and deer and beaver delight in their foliage, twigs & buds. To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/conserved-lands/pocket-swamp/37

MAKING THE MOST OF TRADE LANDS

REDSTONE PRESERVE North Conway, New Hampshire

One aspect of conservation work that is perhaps little-known except to conservation professionals is that not all land donated to land trusts has actual “conservation value.” Conservation value is determined by the land's assets, such as wildlife habitat, open space, recreational access, and watershed resources. When donated land has low or no conservation value, it is referred to as “trade land.”

Occasionally, USVLT receives donations of trade land, and when that happens, it can sell that trade land to help fund its core conservation work. In early 2023, ten acres of land within the Redstone Preserve identified as trade land due to its limited conservation value, was sold to Mount Washington Habitat for Humanity to help address the need for affordable housing in the community. USVLT is proud to bring an innovative and solution-oriented mindset to its conservation work and to collaborate with other area non-profit organizations working to solve important problems in our community.

To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/conserved-lands/redstone_preserve_schiavi/37

COMMUNITY IMPACT IN 2023



2 special edition beers

100+

volunteers put in 3,000+ hours of work



1 ribbon cutting



9 easement explorations



21 days of work pulling invasive species

1,445 acres conserved in 2023!



1 new community forest

17 books reviewed and recommended through #USVLTREADS



4 office dogs



1 tool drive

2 board participants in First Light Learning Journey

*Learn more at dawnlandreturn.org

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust acknowledges that the portion of New Hampshire and Maine in which we operate is the unceded ancestral homeland of the Wabanaki (meaning "People of the Dawn"), including the Pequawket, Ossipee, and Abenaki. The sacred relationship of the Wabanaki to this land and these waters stretches beyond time immemorial, more than 12,000 years. Learn more at usvlt.org/land-acknowledgement-statement

A GLACIAL GEM



CHAIN OF PONDS PROJECT – 2024
Madison, New Hampshire



Photo: Anne Skidmore Photography

After more than 20 years of cultivation, USVLT has the limited opportunity to purchase 625 acres of forestland and inland waters in Madison, New Hampshire, and prevent it from being subdivided and developed or mined for its gravel resources. Known as the Chain of Ponds, this property contains the headwaters of Pequawket Brook and Silver Lake's north inlet. This remarkable project has tremendous conservation value as an ecologically important glacial-trough valley featuring: 110 acres of wetlands and surface waters; 300+ acres of mapped aquifer; 4 miles of surface-water frontage along several ponds and streams, including Tyler Bog, Cranberry Bog, Mack Pond and Blue Pond; and beautiful undulating glacial eskers and cliff and talus slopes.

Development of any kind on this land would devastate the quality and integrity of public and private drinking water supplies in Madison and further downstream in Ossipee. Extractive mining of the property's gravel resources would pose a dire threat to the quality of groundwater resources and to the overall health and integrity of important natural communities found on the land.

To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/chainofponds

Please consider donating



Successful protection of this land will have myriad benefits to residents and visitors of the Mount Washington Valley, including:

- Protection of drinking water supply
- Public recreation opportunities, especially hiking, biking, paddling, hunting, fishing, birding, and snowshoeing
- Experiential learning opportunities for local schools
- Protection of federally and state-listed threatened plants, fish, and birds
- Protection of unique geologic features including kettle hole bogs and glacial eskers
- Maintenance of forest health and integrity through sustainable forestry practices focused on protection of wetlands, streams, and ponds

USVLT must raise the money required to make this project a reality. To date, USVLT has secured two significant grants totaling \$550,000 from an anonymous foundation and the New Hampshire LCHIP program. In 2024, USVLT is seeking additional grant funding and community support in the amount of \$100,000.





Photo Josh Laskin

SMALL BUT MIGHTY



JOCKEY CAP PROJECT UPDATE – 2024

Fryeburg, Maine

USVLT is looking forward to formally transferring its ownership interest in the Jockey Cap parcel to the Town of Fryeburg in 2024. Once this combination is completed, USVLT will hold a conservation easement on the entirety of the Jockey Cap property, setting the stage for close collaboration with the Town on stewardship and management.

Located on the outskirts of Fryeburg Village, and at only 15.6 acres in size, Jockey Cap is small but mighty. Locals and visitors alike love the beginner-friendly hike to the summit and easy access to a variety of rock-climbing routes. Home to a rare pitch pine habitat and topped by a large granite dome offering sweeping views to the White Mountains, Jockey Cap is also used as an outdoor classroom by students and teachers at

many local schools, including the Molly Ockett Elementary and Middle School and Fryeburg Academy.

The Jockey Cap property has pre- and post-colonial historical significance. Molly Ockett, likely the last local member of the Pequawket Tribe (western Wabanaki confederacy), is rumored to have resided onsite in “Molly Ockett’s Cave.” There is a memorial to former resident and arctic explorer Admiral Robert Peary at the summit, and Jockey Cap was home to Maine’s first rope tow for skiing, which was in operation from 1936-1938.

To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/jockey-cap-project

A WEST SIDE STORY

BUN LUCY FARM PROJECT UPDATE – 2024 North Conway, New Hampshire

USVLT is honored to be working with Nat & Marianne Lucy to protect 38.5 acres of farm and forest in North Conway, on land formerly owned by Nat’s uncle, Herbert “Bun” Lucy, and his family. Nestled against West Side Road, the Bun Lucy Farm reaches down to the Saco River and is surrounded by other Lucy family land already protected by USVLT and Forest Society easements.

Used by the Lucy family for maple sugaring and haying, the Bun Lucy Farm has tremendous conservation value, which USVLT is working to enhance with an agricultural easement in 2024. The easement will protect:

- 20 acres of agricultural fields mostly underlain with locally important and prime farmland soils rejuvenated by periodic Saco River floods
- 16 acres of hemlock-hardwood-pine forest, plus 2 acres of floodplain forest dominated by silver maple
- Scenic views of forestland and farmland along West Side Road, a New Hampshire Scenic Byway

To learn more, please visit usvlt.org/the-bun-lucy-farm-project



Staff Photo

FINANCIAL REPORT

(Year Ended December 31, 2023 — Unaudited)

COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUE:			
Membership Contributions	\$74,130	\$ -	\$74,130
Grants and Donations	167,607	1,116,713	1,284,320
Other	58,646	-	58,646
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	206,854	(206,854)	-
Total Operating Revenue	\$507,237	\$909,859	\$1,417,096
EXPENSES:			
Program Services:			
Land Protection & Easement Acquisition	\$ 347,738	\$0	\$ 347,738
Land Stewardship	73,382	-	73,382
Total Program Services	421,120	0	421,120
Management and General	109,125	-	109,125
Fundraising and Outreach	60,710	-	60,710
Total Operating Expenses	590,954	0	590,954
Change in Net Assets	\$(83,717)	\$ 909,859	\$826,142

COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
ASSETS:				
Cash, Unrestricted	\$560,950	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 560,950
Cash, Restricted	-	2,361,336	-	2,361,336
Receivables	1,419	39,225	-	40,644
Prepaid Expenses	32,461	-	-	32,461
Beneficial Interest Held by Others	-	-	271,770	271,770
Non Current Assets	-	10,000	-	10,000
Property & Equipment, net	246,711	-	-	246,711
Land & Conservation Easements	-	-	4,136,094	4,136,094
Total Assets	\$841,541	\$ 2,410,561	\$4,407,864	\$7,659,966
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:				
Accrued Expenses	\$40,582	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,582
Total Liabilities	40,582	-	-	40,582
Net Assets	800,959	2,410,561	4,407,864	7,619,384
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$841,541	\$ 2,410,561	\$4,407,864	\$7,659,966

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. Non-current assets represent pledges that are receivable after one year.

This summary financial report is pending completion of USVLT’s 2023 audit and finalization of Financial Statements, to be audited by the certified public accounting firm of Rowley and Associates, P.C. of Concord, New Hampshire.

Sources of financial support for the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust in 2023 were contributions and grants from individuals, business partners, and foundations.

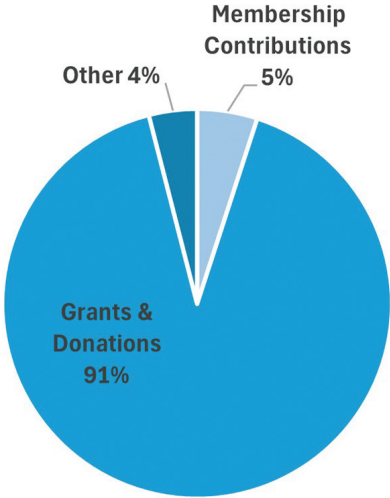
When reviewing the financial results of the organization it is helpful to separate financial activities into these areas:

- Day-to-day operations (rent, phone, staff salaries, etc.), also referred to as “unrestricted activities,” which are funded by unrestricted contributions.
- In 2023, major donations and grants fell behind operational expenses, resulting in an \$85,000 operational deficit.
- Special one-time projects, primarily related to acquisition of land and easements, also referred to as “restricted activities,” which are typically funded by restricted contributions.
- Investment income on various USVLT monies, both restricted and unrestricted (for example, interest on certain types of bank accounts).

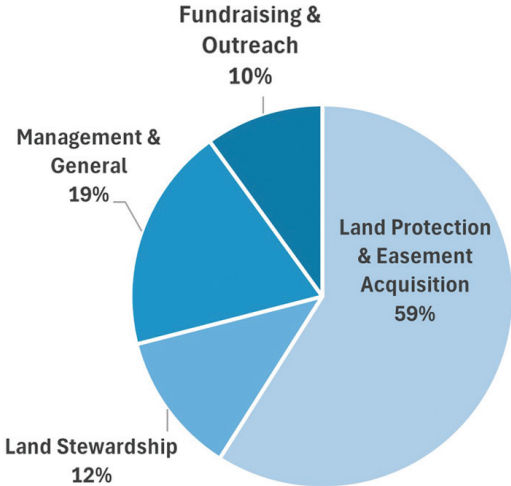
USVLT is at an inflection point. Fast-paced growth in the amount of acreage USVLT has conserved over the last 23 years translates into exponentially increased demand on its capacity. To fulfill both its conservation mission and its stewardship responsibilities and goals, USVLT needs to invest in expanded hiring and professional project-management infrastructure, both of which will require greatly increased financial resources going forward.

Support from the local community is essential. Thank you for investing in conservation by investing in USVLT.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



*This pie chart includes revenue for both our operating and “special projects” budgets/conservation acquisitions.



Photo: Anne Skidmore Photography

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

GIFTS OF TIME

We are deeply appreciative of the many volunteers who supported USVLT with their time and talent in 2023. As a small non-profit with a lean staff and unpaid board, we depend on the generosity of our volunteers. Do you want to get involved? Learn more at usvlt.org/what-you-can-do/volunteer.

GIFTS OF TREASURE

Our work depends crucially on gifts of land and of treasure on the part of countless individuals and families. Last year, we made the decision to devote more space in this publication to stories about our work and impact, rather than publishing a full list of our ever-growing family of supporters. Though the names of our individual supporters are not listed here, please know they are known to and valued by us. We are especially moved by the numerous memorial and honorary gifts that were made last year. Your support, in all its forms, inspires us to work harder.

CARS PROGRAM

We are excited to have launched a vehicle donation program, and even more excited to announce we received our first gift of a vehicle in late 2023! Inaugural car donor Max Hulljung said about the process, "Donating was easy; it took less than 10 minutes, and I am happy to help aid in land conservation." To learn more about how you can donate your used car or other vehicle, please visit usvlt.org/donate/vehicle-donation-program

OUR 2023 GRANT MAKING PARTNERS

Anonymous

Buckingham Mountain Foundation
Land & Community Heritage Investment
Program (LCHIP)

Maine Community Foundation
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
New Hampshire State Conservation Commission
– Moose Plate Grant

Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative/
Momentum Conservation
The 1156 Foundation
The Ann R. Dow Family Foundation
The Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge Trust

BUSINESS PARTNERS

A special THANK YOU to these business partners!
Please support them, because when you do, you're also
supporting conservation in the Valley!

CONTRIBUTE TO PLACE AND SACO RIVER LEVEL \$1000+



SWIFT RIVER LEVEL \$500+

Dutch Bloemen Winkel
Eastern Slope Inn Resort
Emerald Tree Experts
Flatbread Pizza Company
Minuteman Press
Northway Bank
The Country Consulting Group, Inc.
White Mountain Oil & Propane
White Mountain Puzzles

ELLIS RIVER LEVEL \$250+

Cooper Cargill Chant
Edge of Maine Art & Framing
Jackson Art Studio
Ledge Brewing Company
Little Meadow for Mardi
Lucy Hardware
Spice and Grain
The Local Grocer
White Birch Books

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Conservation Director
Vicki Soletsky
Office Manager

LET'S CONNECT

Visit usvlt.org to learn
more about our work and
to find resources about
land conservation in the
Upper Saco Valley.

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 @uppersacovalleylandtrust



PO Box 2233

Conway, NH 03818

A Mark of Distinction
This accreditation seal affirms
national quality standards are met.



Annual Meeting May 4, 2024

9 a.m., Nature Learning Center

Tin Mountain Conservation Center

Learn more at usvt.org/events_listing

Non-Profit Org.
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