

Upper Saco Valley Land Trust
2020 ANNUAL MEETING - Meeting Minutes
9 a.m., Friday, May 22nd, 2020

Virtual Location via Zoom.us: [URL:https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85241098729](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85241098729)

Members, Board, and Staff Present:

1. Anne Pillion, Director
 2. Hadley Champlin, Member
 3. William Abbott, Staff
 4. Abby King, Staff (taking minutes)
 5. Aimee St.Germain, Staff
 6. Doug Burnell, President
 7. Kathy Burnell, Member
 8. Dagmar von Schwerin, Member
 9. Larry Garland, Member and Pine Hill Management Committee
 10. Ailie Byers- Member, Development Committee
 11. Lindsay Kafka – Member, Development Committee
 12. Gail Ferreira, Member
 13. Peter Benson, Director
 14. Peter Howe, Land Steward (staff)
 15. Alex Drummond, Director
 16. Lori Jean Kinsey, Member and Pine Hill Management Committee
 17. Mark Dindorf, Vice President, Land Committee Chair & Personnel Committee
 18. Chuck Henderson, Senator Shaheen's Office
 19. Meghan Moody, Member
 20. Linda Gray, Member
 21. Ann Bennett-Director and Development Committee Chair
 22. Rick Jenkinson -Secretary and SACo committee
 23. Philip Ostroski - Member
 24. Tim Scott, Member
 25. Tricia Mattox-Larson, Member
 26. Dan Robins, Member
 27. Jim Hastings, Director
 28. Dan Stepanauskas, Director
 29. Sue Nichols, Director
 30. George Hill, Member
 31. Jeffrey Lathrop, Member
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- I. President calls the meeting to order
 - a. Doug welcomed all and introduced William
 - b. William gave some Zoom pointers: every attendee is automatically muted, William can unmute anyone, or they can unmute themselves
 - c. Attendance is being taken via the Chat window. Please use that to write the names of the people in attendance at your household

- d. Materials for the meeting are posted on our website; William shared his screen so that everyone on Zoom can see how to access them
 - e. Annual report is on the website, it celebrates the 10-year anniversary of Art Celebrates Place
 - f. Voting: Raise your hand in front of your computer camera. We may entertain a vote in the negative direction if it does not appear we are reaching consensus
 - g. Staff and board are always available via email and cell if people have follow-up questions
 - h. William showed off our lovely new office; was sad to say that we had to cancel our Open House and Annual meeting
 - i. Erika Rowland left the organization last summer to take over as E.D. at GLLT. Will be many opportunities to collaborate with her in her new role.
 - j. Abby King replaced Erika. She is present and taking minutes.
 - k. Aimee St.Germain is new office and outreach manager. Present.
 - l. Peter Howe is our land steward. Present.
 - m. Jesse Wright left her position with USVLT to take a permanent position with the NH Association of Conservation Districts in January. She is still participating at select USVLT events in the future. Will be many opportunities to collaborate with her in her new role.
- II. Introductions - Members' sign-in, introduction of staff & meeting roles, and summary review of the powers granted to USVLT members
- a. Doug explains why we have an annual meeting, who is considered to be a USVLT Member per our bylaws.
 - b. Voting privileges; if you are a Member please vote
 - c. Feedback is important: please reach out with thoughts. You have the power to announce nominations. You have the power to convene your own meetings and to have votes from such meetings be binding on the Board of Directors.
 - d. USVLT is made up of our Members. You make our work possible.
- III. Secretary's Report – Rick Jenkinson
- a. The 2019 Annual Meeting minutes were posted on the USVLT website last week. They are viewable now.
 - b. Rick requested Doug to open up floor and entertain a vote
 - c. Doug requested if there are any edits. Hearing none, he shared 3 edits related to the name of last year's Annual Meeting location (it is the Mineral Spring Café, not the Mineral Springs Café) and the name of the local fire and water precinct (it is the Conway Village Fire District, not "Department").
 - d. No other edits or comments were presented or forthcoming.
 - e. **ANNE PILLION makes a motion to accept the Secretary's Report as amended. LINDA GRAY seconds.**
 - f. **MOTION to accept Secretary's report as amended PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**
- IV. Treasurer's Report –Jim Hastings

- a. Jim referred attendees to the Treasurer's report in the back of the annual report
- b. Jim summarized the accounting of the Land Trust into 2 functions:
 - i. 1. Operating Funds. These are for day-to-day functioning.
 - ii. 2. Restricted (non-operating) Funds. These funds can only be used for the functions that were restricted by the donor of the funds, like specific land project and outreach initiatives.
- c. 2019 was a good year.
 - i. Revenues were up 4%, in large part due to successful fundraising events. Revenue increased to \$226K
 - ii. Expenses were up to \$221K, which is up 23% from 2018
 - iii. 2018 was artificially low because a lot of staff time was spent on projects
 - iv. Many government grants and foundations, including an anonymous family foundation, supported restricted projects
 - v. Land was donated at around \$223K in value, which, as opposed to conservation easements, is booked at face value
 - vi. Cash availability was good in 2019. Procedures are in place to ensure that we have funds to maintain and steward conservation easement obligations. USVLT has \$214K invested with MCF. Every year they spin off funds to help us do stewardship on lands we are responsible for.
 - vii. We have an operating reserve of around \$100K.
 - viii. We have a legal reserve fund
- d. Jim opened up the floor for questions.
- e. Seeing none, Doug opened floor for motions. Noted that our annual financial audit will amend this report once it is complete
- f. **GAIL FERREIRA makes the motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, as presented. ANNE PILLION seconds.**
- g. **MOTION to accept the Treasurer's report PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

V. President's Comments

- a. Doug Burnell – "Strange Times call for Strange Meetings"
- b. Despite these trying times, we are doing well. We have several large unrestricted grants (30K) that have been received early which has been helpful
- c. We have a PPP loan that was approved in the second round of funding, with operating cash deposited on May 7th. Hopeful we can translate this loan to a grant in early July.
- d. The new office is beautiful
 - i. We moved in earlier in the year before the virus hit. The Conway Historical Society is our landlord, and we will eventually be sharing office and/or storage space with them.
 - ii. The land around the building is owned by the Conway Village Fire District. We have parking and land access agreements with them.
 - iii. There is also a large room downstairs which we hope will be an asset for meetings and events for other community groups.

- iv. The office may also become a gallery of sorts, there is a lot of artwork from ACP that we will be able to display.
 - v. Small offices on second floor and a few other rooms reserved for CHS.
 - vi. Office procedures: continue doing business remotely and will be open for appointment only. Best way to get in touch remains email or direct calls to cell phones of staff.
 - vii. Our work has continued despite virus. There has been no slowdown in work completed and lots of new projects coming in. Thanks in part to our hard-working Development and Land Committees and their leaders. Kudos to them.
 - e. Chuck Henderson from Senator Shaheen's office has joined us and has some greetings from the Senator
 - i. Chuck read the Senator's letter, congratulating USVLT on 20 years on conservation work in one of New Hampshire's most treasured landscape.
- VI. Executive Director's Comments – William Abbott Report on Development Activities and Land Project status
- a. 2018 Projects that closed:
 - i. The annual report celebrates last year's closing, namely the Redstone Preserve donated by John Schiavi.
 - ii. We are at the beginning stages of working on a partnership with Habitat For Humanity for a portion of that land to be slated for affordable housing (a small portion of the property is better suited for affordable housing than for conservation land)
 - b. We are closing in closing four of our active projects within the next 1-3 months. These are projects that were slated to close in 2019 but experienced delays
 - i. World Fellowship Center – Albany, NH
 - 1. The World Fellowship Center project is a complicated project that will protect 400 acres in Albany, NH, through three separate conservation easements. This is a capstone project that protects biodiversity and water quality.
 - 2. Several property line, survey, abutter, title issues, etc. has delayed the completion of the due diligence phase.
 - 3. We are scheduled to close on the WFC easements on May 29th
 - ii. Hill Family Lands – Eaton, NH
 - 1. We are also anticipating closing on the Hill Family Preserve in Eaton NH – 215 acres on the western-facing slope of Foss Mountain. Has been maintained by the Hill Family as a tree farm since the 60s.
 - 2. We are still waiting on our final survey and then we will be prepped for closing
 - 3. There is a small cabin on site, that will be leased back to the family but the land will be given outright

4. George Hill, present on the Zoom meeting, shared his thoughts about the legacy of his land, and the care that his family has taken to steward it over the years. He also noted that the lease on the house will go to Jim Hill as long as he lives; since he has no children, the use of the house will revert to USVLT
- iii. OLD BLAKE FARM
 1. This project has been on the docket for approx. 8 years
 2. 95 acres along Old County Road in Brownfield
 3. Donation of an easement from several families that own the property together; the easement will preserve the scenic, agricultural nature of that area of Brownfield
 4. We are awaiting ownership review of the easement.
 - iv. LUCY BROOK FARM
 1. 45 acres of farmland along the upper portion of West Side Road
 2. Received funding from USDA's "ALE" (Agricultural Land Easement) program and the NH Department of Environmental Services Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund program because it overlays a stratified drift aquifer
 3. We are in our due diligence phase with those funders.
 4. Will likely close in September
- c. Future projects we are working on are several:
 - i. The Dundee Management Project (Beal).
 1. This is a large complex project that will take 3+ years to complete.
 2. This is a partnership project with the Trust for Public Land.
 3. 1,200 acres are being preserved. 1,000 will be transferred to USVLT in fee. 200 acres to WMNF. Will be managed as a community forest (logging and recreation) by a joint committee from the towns of Jackson and Bartlett
 4. It looks like we will receive \$2.3M in funding from the Forest Legacy Program. As a nationally ranked grant program, we are fortunate and pleased to announce that the project ranked #12 in the nation. This signals a green light for us to work more on this project – e.g., we are applying for \$500-\$600K from LCHIP for this project as well as several other smaller grants, starting due diligence on title work, and putting the project out to bid for surveying.
 5. William shared a map of the project
 - ii. Pine Hill Expansion Project
 1. We are already engaged with Town of Conway and other stakeholders to manage the existing community forest (a project that closed in 2018), and we are excited about an opportunity to significantly expand and enhance the community forest.
 2. This new project expands the original forest by 134 acres and allows for 2 new trailheads and parking. It unlocks the key for

better use of the entire forest because of better linkages for trails and nearby Conway Rec Path project.

3. We are working with many stakeholders on this acquisition of new land as well as developing trails on the existing parcel
 4. We are applying for funds from Northern Borders Regional Commission for the envisioned trail network, and applying to LCHIP for funds for acquisition of the new land. In total, these grants applications will be likely more than \$500K in potential funding
- iii. Several other projects are in the works but they are in earlier stages than the two community forests mentioned, so we will not be discussing them today
 - iv. We need to provide match funding for the large government grants earmarked for these projects. In late 2019 and early 2020, we had formed a capital campaign committee to strategize raising these funds. The committee had convened only a few times when the COVID-19 pandemic forced a change in operations. The fundraising campaign has now been suspended because of the pandemic, but we expect to restart campaign planning later this year.
 - v. We are up for re-accreditation this year from the Land Trust Alliance. We were first accredited in 2015, and the accreditation term lasts for five years; by the end of 2020 we will be submitting a renewal application.

VII. Acknowledgment of Retiring Board Members – Doug Burnell

- a. Jim Hastings is retiring after 12 years on the Board
 - i. Doug shared his profound thanks for Jim's time and financial and accounting acumen
 - ii. Jim has led annual budgeting and reporting and helped coach staff and board members
 - iii. We will miss him!
 - iv. He has agreed to help serve in the background as a de-facto bookkeeper for the time being
- b. Tom Gross is also retiring from the board this year
 - i. Tom, who was first elected to the board in 2007, is moving on to devote more of his time to the Saco Headwaters Alliance, which is now its own organization having recently received 501(c)(3) status
 - ii. We look forward to many future collaborations with Tom and his newly chartered organization.
- c. Intra-term resignations from:
 - i. Burgess Smith. Our resident historian and philosopher, Burgess moved to Lancaster NH to be closer to family. He always challenged us to recognize challenges and pursue opportunities related to global climate change, and future freshwater shortages outside of our service area.

- ii. Greg Cooper. Greg, a forester with the White Mountain National Forest, took a new job working for The Nature Conservancy in North Carolina. Greg's presence will be missed on Land Committee and the Pine Hill Management Committee, where he shared his valuable perspective as a forester.
- iii. Deborah Fauver. Deborah's semi-retirement from Cooper Cargill Chant coincided with many unanticipated family obligations; she has been too busy with these and other volunteer roles and regrettably resigned mid-term. Doug mentioned his appreciation for her service on the Board, her legal acumen, and her recent work shepherding Conway's first remote "drive through" voting day as Town Moderator.
- iv. We are sad to lose all three and are profoundly thankful for their service.

VIII. Nominating Committee Report – Anne Pillion

- a. Anne introduced our nominees for our Board of Directors, as well as a newly appointed Director, Sue Nichols, who joined us earlier this year. Anne then introduced the proposed slate for both Board renewals and Officers.
- b. Anne welcomed any members to get involved in standing committees. Our bylaws also allow for membership-led nominations from the floor.
- c. All new and re-elected terms of service are voted on by the full membership
- d. Nominations:
 - i. Meghan Moody. Resident of Bartlett. Volunteer at many USVLT events and member of ACP committee. Consideration is for election to a 1-year term
 - ii. Lindsay Kafka. Member of Development Committee for last 2 years. Part-time resident of South Conway with plans to become full-time this fall. Consideration is for election to a 3-year term
- e. Newly appointed:
 - i. Sue Nichols. Appointed to fill the mid-term vacancy left by Burgess Smith. She will now be re-upping for 3 more years of service. Sue has been a member of USVLT since 2009 and a member of the Development Committee since 2017. She is a resident of Center Conway.
- f. New roles:
 - i. Rebecca McReynolds being nominated as Treasurer to replace Jim Hastings.
- g. Anne requested any further nominations from the floor. Seeing none,
- h. Anne proposed full slate of Directors and Officers:
 - i. Board-recommended nominations for election to three-year term: Lindsay Kafka
 - ii. Board-recommended nominations for election to one-year term: Meghan Moody

- iii. Board-recommended nominations for re-election to three-year terms: Ann Bennett, Anne Pillion, Dan Stepanauskas, Sue Nichols
 - iv. Proposed Slate of Officers of the Board: Doug Burnell, President; Mark Dindorf, Vice President; Rebecca McReynolds, Treasurer; Rick Jenkinson, Secretary
 - i. Doug entertained a motion to nominate full slate of directors and officers
 - j. MOVED by PETER BENSON. Seconded by ALEX DRUMMOND**
 - k. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**
- IX. Other Business (questions & answers)
 - a. Lindsay Kafka – thank you to the staff for adjusting to “new normal” amidst the pandemic.
 - b. George Hill– our family will never forget Eaton and we will still be here.
 - c. Meghan Moody – thanked for accepting my nomination. Look forward to working with you.
- X. President adjourns meeting at 10:11am