

Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation



preserve
promote
educate

Protecting the Rural New England Character of Williamstown Since 1986

2017 Annual Report Summer 2018



Harmon Pond, above, was included in one of two generous land donations to Rural Lands in 2017. The 64-acre parcel encompassing all of Harmon Pond sits at the end of Sweet Brook Road and was donated by Pam Weatherbee. Additionally, Sarah Tenney and Gail (Tenney) Nields donated 178 acres of land off of Berlin Road. Marked trails now traverse both properties. They are open to the public and awaiting your next adventure!



David McGowan receiving the symbolic baton handoff from Leslie Reed-Evans at the annual meeting in May 2017

From the President...

This past year, 2017, proved bittersweet for Rural Lands. We said goodbye to Leslie Reed-Evans, our executive director, after 23 years of extraordinary service and dedication to our mission. She led us through a period of significant accomplishments and thoughtful expansion of our programs. And we were equally pleased to welcome on board David McGowan, our new executive director by way of Mass Audubon, for what looks like an exciting period of renewed commitment in the areas of lands conservation and nature education. David has settled in and has already shown us the steady leadership we expected from him.

The state of Rural Lands is strong. Its membership is active. Its financial house is in order. Its support for conservation, education and environmental protection remains unwavering.

Phil McKnight, President

From the former Director...

The beginning of 2017 saw the first interviews for the new Executive Director of the WRLF. My retirement, announced formally in the fall of 2016, brought about the opportunity for a strategic look at the organization and visioning for the future.

The interview and hiring process lasted through the early part of the year and the decision to hire long-time Massachusetts land conservationist David McGowan was made by March.

Completing this first and critical stage of the transition allowed WRLF to focus on two important land protec-

tion projects as well as continue its ongoing conservation and education work.

The first project was the transfer of the gift of 178 acres of wooded land along the Taconic Trail in Williamstown. The woodland is adjacent to state-owned preservation lands and part of the original holdings of the Tenney family. (Judge Sanborn Tenney began purchasing land in the Taconic foothills in the early 1900s; the core of the Taconic Trail State Park came from land donated by members of the Tenney family.) The second project was the completion of the gift of Harmon Pond Preserve from long-time WRLF friend and Williamstown conservationist Pamela Weatherbee. The 60 acres encompass beautiful mature hemlock woods, Harmon Pond and its associated wetland complex, and a trail system linking the Preserve with Margaret Lindley Park.

These projects were especially meaningful as they were my last land projects as Executive Director. The symbolic baton was passed at the 2017 May Annual Meeting, and it has been a pleasure to see David finish out a successful year and become a familiar presence at Sheep Hill.

I have decided that retirement is a bit like being in a far-flung country after a very long flight from the comforts of home. It's different and strange, a bit unsettling even, and it is hard to adjust to a new routine. But just like a travel adventure, it doesn't take long to embrace the new and different and enjoy discovering an altered life style (no more alarm clocks!). I am sure it will be a wonderful journey.

Leslie Reed-Evans, Former Executive Director

From the new Director...

I began my immersion into Rural Lands last May at the Local Flavors dinner at Bascom Lodge atop Mount Greylock. There, listening to the excited conversations around the dinner table, I sensed the commitment and enthusiasm WRLF friends and members hold for the organization. I heard about upcoming hikes, a bird sighting, and summer nature programs. I was eager to dive in.

And so I did. I followed Leslie for a week in late June – making introductions, visiting conserved properties, trying to figure out a routine. Only, I found that there is no typical, routine day at Rural Lands. Every day is different. Walk a property with a landowner one day; a bear in the parking lot the next. March in the Fourth of July parade on Tuesday; fireflies, families, and s'mores on Friday. It's a wonderfully diverse collection of people and experiences with never the same day twice. It's something that attracted me to the position and was evident from the start.

Working with the board, we established goals and objectives for 2018. We are excited to bring the Rosenberg family's history at Sheep Hill to life with a new exhibit. Using a touch screen computer and interpretive panels, the exhibit will highlight the 50 years the Rosenbergs ran a dairy farm at Sheep Hill, including its winter use as a ski area. Videos, audio, still photos, and text will illustrate the Rosenbergs' story. Look for an opening in the fall.

Also in 2018, we will explore the possibility of installing solar panels on the Lewis Center buildings. A solar array would allow WRLF to generate renewable power and reduce our utility bills. If we move forward with the plan, real time power generation will be displayed on the same computer monitor used for the Rosenberg exhibit so visitors can watch green energy in the making.

So at the end of 2017, I am pleased to report that the health of the organization is good. We ended with a slight surplus in our budget that will be used in 2018 to paint the farmhouse and refinish the floors, both badly needed. I am grateful for Leslie's continued involvement with Rural Lands and for the sage advice of our dedicated board. And I am thankful to you, our wonderful members, who support and sustain us. See you at Sheep Hill soon.

David McGowan, Executive Director

At the 2017 WRLF annual meeting...

Jennifer Swoap stepped off the Board in 2017. Jennifer shared her expertise and passion for elementary education by serving on the WRLF Education Committee.

Our nature programming for children greatly benefited from Jennifer's service. Thank you!

We were pleased to welcome Bob Kraus to the Board. Bob brings his legal background and love of the outdoors to the WRLF. We look forward to working with him in the coming years.

The 2017 Lewis Conservation Award was given to Art Evans in recognition of his generous support of the WRLF. Art quietly and selflessly contributes to WRLF in a myriad of ways—leading summer programs, offering blacksmithing demonstrations, mowing trails at Sheep Hill, and sharing his beautiful photography. The award was established in 2011 in memory of Mary Mink Lewis and R. Cragin Lewis on the 25th anniversary of the WRLF's founding, in order to recognize members who are exemplary conservation leaders in the community, and whose contributions to land conservation and to the WRLF have been central to its success.

Two pledges of significant donations for conservation and education in Leslie's honor were announced. Joe's Wetland Walk was dedicated at the conclusion. The walk was made possible by gifts in memory of Joe Low.

The Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation is successful because of the generous support it receives from members. Additionally, we are grateful for the hard work and financial support of the community and these foundations and programs in 2017.

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation: Gateway Fund for the North Adams School District and Williamstown Elementary School Endowment Fund

*Center for Environmental Studies,
Center for Learning in Action,
& ECON 477 Project,
Williams College*

The Clark 5K Trailblazer Run

Lenox Garden Club

Massachusetts Cultural Council: Cultural Council of Northern Berkshire



MountainOne Community Dividend Grants

Stewart's Shops for Education

*Williamstown Community Chest,
Mary and Henry Flynt Fund*

2017 Members of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation

† Deceased; ◇ Endowment; New members are indicated in **bold**; Dedications are *italicized*.

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In Memory of David Peth

Rosemarie Gumple

Gifts to the Mathias J. Bartels Environmental Award Fund support an annual award to a graduating senior at Mt. Greylock Regional High School who has demonstrated environmental leadership. It is named in memory of Mathias Bartels, who set an example of leadership at Mt. Greylock. The 2017 recipient was Niku Darafshi.

For the Endowment of the Mathias J. Bartels Environmental Award Fund

Donna and James Heekin III
Margaret Kensingher

The *WRLF Broadbent Endowment for the 21st Century* was founded by William and Camille Broadbent in 1992 to help ensure funds would be available to support important land preservation projects. Bill, a 1973 graduate of Williams College, sought to grow the fund and raise awareness of WRLF among people with ties to Williamstown, and proposed a challenge to donate \$45,000 if \$45,000 could be raised by his 45th class reunion in 2018. Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of many donors, that goal was surpassed and the total was over \$95,000. Gifts to the endowment fund are a lasting legacy for all who appreciate Williamstown's fields, forests, and purple mountains.

2017 Gifts to the Broadbent Endowment Fund for the 21st Century 45 for 45 Challenge

Phillip Bartow
Peter Boudreau and Cathy Talarico
Jere R. Thomson



2017 WRLF summer interns L-R Katie Manning and Liam Simpson, both Williams College students, developed exhibits in the Dietze Interpretive Center and helped lead kids' summer programs.

Comparative Financial Summary Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, Inc.

CONDENSED COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION December 31, 2017 and 2016

	2017	2016
Cash and Other Receivables	\$ 202,691	\$ 187,642
Conservation Land at cost	2,819,397	2,175,248
Property and Equipment	384,252	397,208
Investments & Endowment at Market Value	<u>1,099,214</u>	<u>898,625</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 4,505,554</u>	<u>\$ 3,658,723</u>
Total Liabilities	\$ 86,523	\$ 25,030
Total Net Assets	<u>4,419,031</u>	<u>3,633,693</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$ 4,505,554</u>	<u>\$ 3,658,723</u>

CONDENSED COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES For the Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

	2017	2016
Membership Revenue	\$ 129,474	\$ 122,882
Donations, Fundraising, Grants and Other	<u>755,535</u>	<u>266,800</u>
Subtotal	885,009	389,682
Investment Income	62,604	33,852
Net <u>Unrealized</u> Gain/(Loss) on Investments	<u>99,280</u>	<u>36,707</u>
Total Revenues	1,046,893	460,241
Total Expenses	<u>261,555</u>	<u>407,074</u>
Increases in Net Assets	785,338	53,167
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	<u>3,633,693</u>	<u>3,633,693</u>
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 4,419,031</u>	<u>\$ 3,686,860</u>

You can leave a legacy through your bequest to the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation

A bequest to the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation can have a lasting impact on the unique rural character and scenic beauty of Williamstown while protecting its working farms and forests, and natural and cultural heritage for the future.

Bequests allow you to make decisions about your estate and can be used to make a substantial gift to a specific fund, such as the WRLF's land fund, or the Broadbent Endowment to ensure annual support for our general work. In some cases, a bequest may reduce estate taxes. Your bequest will most certainly enhance the WRLF's ability to achieve its mission.

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*indicates term of expiration

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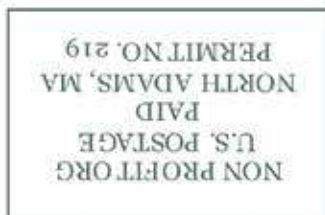
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Thank you for your commitment to WRLF this past year!

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Protecting the Rural New England Character of Williamstown Since 1986
 Sheep Hill, 671 Cold Spring Road Williamstown, MA 01267

