Williamstown preserve promote educate Rural Lands Foundation

Protecting the Rural New England Character of Williamstown Since 1986

2018 Annual Report June 2019



Over 2,000 feet of the West Branch of the Green River was protected by a generous gift of land to WRLF in 2018. The 82-acre parcel contains forests, fields, and river frontage and was donated by Deborah Menaker Rothschild and David Rothschild. The Berkshire Natural Resources Council holds a perpetual conservation restriction on the property which the Town of Williamstown approved. Look for opportunities for the public to access the land in the future.



On October 14, WRLF held the grand opening of the Rosenburg multi-media exhibit in the Dietze Interpretive Center. A gorgeous fall day attracted a good crowd. Simultaneously, an Art-in-the-Barn fundraiser was held in the Horse Barn. The event featured artwork by local artists inspired by the beauty of Sheep Hill and its environs that was available for sale. Artists donated all or a portion of the proceeds to the conservation work of Rural Lands. We are grateful to the following artists who shared their work:

| Peter Boudreau |
|----------------|
| Jytte Brooks |
| Ed Carson |
| Sharon Carson |
| Mike Glier |

Ghetta Hirsch Ann Kremers Robert H. Lafond John MacDonald Julia E. Morgan Sara Farrell Okamura Michele Ridgeway Lucy Rollins Joan Safford Wright

From the President...

With the 2018 annual meeting I concluded my threeyear term as President of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation. I have enjoyed every minute. I am grateful for the support and the expectations from David McGowan, our executive director, who has been superb as he settled into his role, the Board and the membership. My task was made so much easier by the unstinting support of everyone. I welcome the same for my successor as President, Malcolm Smith.

I offer two challenges to Rural Lands as it addresses with a heightened sense of urgency what I believe lies ahead for our organization. The first challenge comes in two parts and relies on the fact that the past informs the present. First, we must continue to meet, as we have before under our former executive director Leslie Reed-Evans' dynamic example and now David McGowan's energetic effort, with imagination and enthusiasm our fundamental purpose - land conservation. We are first and foremost a land conservation organization. We conserve land, because that is the right thing to do both for our community in fulfilment of our mission and as an example for others in the region around us. Second, we must continue and strengthen our commitment to nature education. That

means children, the hope for our future, through programs like Woodchuck Wednesdays and grade-school class field trips to Sheep Hill, immersing them in the wonderful opportunities available in the Dietze Interpretive Center and at Josiah's Pond. At the same time we must increase our educational offerings for adults, including a close examination of the issues pertaining to our warming planet.

The second challenge I offer to Rural Lands acknowledges the reality of the present and with determination looks to a better future. I envision a Rural Lands under Malcolm Smith, as President, and the Board's active leadership, and with the enthusiastic support of our membership, addressing the single most important environmental protection issue of our times, climate change. I mean climate change as a scientific, economic and political reality. We can and should be leaders in this effort, not just in Williamstown but also in partnership with other well-established conservation organizations in the Berkshires, eastern New York, and southern Vermont. Installing solar panels on the roof of the Rosenburg Room at Sheep Hill was just a start. As a land conservation and nature education organization, we must address the many complex and difficult challenges represented by the term "climate change."

With enormous gratitude for what each of you have contributed to Rural Lands in the past and with the fullest expectation that you will continue to do so as we work to carry out our mandate, I thank you for being a part of Rural Lands while we face our future together.

Phil McKnight, President

From the Director...

Telling the Sunny Brook Farm story was a meaningful introductory project for me in 2018. As a newcomer to town, it was a great way to immerse myself in the history of my new environs. Art and Ella Rosenburg ran Sunny Brook Farm (at what we now call Sheep Hill) for most of the 20th century. They were quiet giants in the community – tending a herd of dairy cows, mentoring young farmers, and welcoming downhill skiers to the farm in winter.

Of course, it was the telling of the story that brought all of this to light for me.

Shortly after I started at WRLF, Donna Manley visited Sheep Hill. Donna is the granddaughter of Art and Ella. She spent many summers at the farm as a young girl. She described an idea that she and Leslie Reed Evans (my predecessor as WRLF Director) had hatched – to create new interpretive exhibits that would include videotaping Donna recounting her experiences and stories with her grandparents. I embraced the idea and our project commenced.

Donna, Leslie, and I recruited Hank Art of Williams College to join our project team. Hank knew the Rosenburgs well and the importance of the farm to the community.

We each had our assignments: Leslie focused on interpretive panels that would be installed in the Tool Shed and Dairy Barn, Donna worked with her son to videotape her reflections, Hank researched the history of the land and combed through the Williams archives, and I worked with a developer to create a website that would include historic videos and photographs. The media includes Hank's documentaries of Arthur Rosenburg, and historical footage of Williams College Winter Carnivals filmed by Alfred Schlesinger in the 1930-40s.

The culmination of a year and a half of meetings, brainstorming, and production gave rise to an exhibit of Rosenburg farming history and the lost ski area at Sheep Hill. Funding for the exhibit came from the Mary and Henry Flynt Fund of the Williamstown Community Chest and from Donna (Rosenburg) Manley. Cory Campbell of the Williams College Office of Information Technology also lent his expertise to the project.

The exhibit - consisting of interpretive panels, skiing

artifacts, and touch-screen digital display in the Dairy Barn - is open to the public. The Rosenburg website can now be found at sunnybrookfarm.wrlf.org.

David McGowan, Executive Director

At the 2018 WRLF annual meeting...

Molly Polk and Win Stuebner stepped off the WRLF board. Molly shared her expertise and passion for elementary education by serving on the WRLF Education Committee and Win admirably led the Membership Committee (with which he will continue to assist). Thank you both for your service to Rural Lands!

We were pleased to welcome Melissa Cragg, Tom Leamon, and Barbara Carr to the Board. They bring diverse backgrounds in finance, health, and education, respectively. We look forward to working with them in the coming years.

The 2018 Lewis Conservation Award was given to Bill and Camille Broadbent in recognition of their generous support of WRLF. Bill and Camille have long believed in supporting land conservation around the country, including WRLF's work in Williamstown. In 1999, they founded the WRLF Broadbent Endowment Fund for the 21st Century and have since offered challenges to secure additional funding for it. The Broadbents are helping ensure the work of Rural Lands into the future. The award was established in 2011 in memory of Mary Mink Lewis and R. Cragin Lewis, in order to recognize exemplary conservation leaders in the community, and who have been central to WRLF's success.

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 2018.

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation: Williamstown Elementary School Endowment Fund

Center for Environmental Studies, Center for Learning in Action, & Office of Information Technology, Williams College

Denver Foundation, Madroño Fund

MountainOne Community Dividend Grants

USDA NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

Williamstown Community Chest, Mary and Henry Flynt Fund

2018 Members of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation

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

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Tela Zasloff

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 2018 recipient was Bennett Zimmerman.

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

David and Devan Bartels Thomas and Elizabeth Bartels Donna and James R. Heekin III Margaret H. Kensinger

Additional Gifts in Memoriam

In Memory of David Keenleyside

Penny Low

In Memory of Jack Talarico
Anonymous

In Memory of Dick Wells
Leslie Reed-Evans and Art Evans



2018 WRLF summer interns L-R Kendall McGowan and Louisa Ebby, by the Berlin Road property waterfall, developed interactive activities in the Dietze Interpretive Center, did web and digital design work, and helped lead kids' summer programs.



As WRLF staff and volunteers were preparing for the opening of the Rosenburg exhibit and the Art in the Barn event, a gentleman named Charles Phelps dropped by Sheep Hill. Charles told us that he used to operate the rope tow at Sunny Brook Farm during the late 1950s. Charles said that he didn't ski and that running the rope tow was a way to engage with the Williams College ski crowd. The Rosenburg exhibit contains plenty of ski history at Sheep Hill. Charlie's visit was a bit of serendipity!

2018, by the numbers:

552

Students took field trips to Sheep Hill 82

Acres protected

14

Slideshows and videos in the new Rosenburg exhibit

Some years ago, William and Camille Broadbent established The Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation Broadbent Endowment for the 21st Century to help ensure funds to support important land preservation projects. Bill, a 1973 graduate of William College, sought to grow the fund and raise awareness among people with ties to Williamstown, and proposed a challenge to donate \$45,000 if \$45,000 could be raised by the time of his 45th class reunion in 2018. Their goal was exceeded, and they hosted a 45th reunion event at Sheep Hill in June introducing Bill's classmates to WRLF. Not resting on success, the Broadbents then issued a new challenge to donate \$50,000 if an additional \$50,000 can be raised by Bill's 50th reunion. Their passion for land conservation is inspiring and we appreciate their generosity and that of all donors. Gifts to the endowment fund will be a lasting legacy for all who appreciate Williamstown's fields, forests and purple mountains.

2018 Gifts to the Broadbent Endowment Fund for the 21st Century 50 for 50 Challenge

John G. and Amy Smith Berylson, and Jennifer Berylson Block
Bill and Camille Broadbent
Joseph and Françoise Connors
Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Eyre
David Futransky, in honor of Bill and Camille Broadbent's work with WRLF
Paul J. and Karen Cromer Isaac
Kate and Chet Lasell
Dusty and Caitlin Lopez
Cynthia L. and William E. Simon
Katey Winant

Comparative Financial Summary Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, Inc.

CONDENSED COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION December 31, 2018 and 2017

| | | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|----|-----------|-----------------|
| Cash and Other Recievables | \$ | 268,020 | \$ 202,691 |
| Conservation Land at cost | | 3,155,920 | 2,819,397 |
| Property and Equipment | | 390,590 | 384,252 |
| Investments & Endowment at Market Value | e | 1,052,618 | 1,099,214 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$ | 4,867,148 | \$ 4,505,554 |
| Total Liabilities | \$ | 145,083 | \$ 86,523 |
| Total Net Assets | | 4,722,065 | 4,419,031 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | \$ | 4,867,148 | \$ 4,505,554 |

CONDENSED COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES For the Years Ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Membership Revenue | \$ 140,153 | \$ 129,474 |
| Donations, Fundraising, Grants and Other | 502,341 | 755,535 |
| Subtotal | 642,494 | 885,009 |
| Investment Income | 117,070 | 62,604 |
| Net <u>Unrealized</u> Gain/(Loss) on Investments | (153,132) | 99,280 |
| Total Revenues | 606,432 | 1,046,893 |
| Total Expenses | 303,398 | 261,555 |
| Increases in Net Assets | 303,034 | 785,338 |
| Net Assets at Beginning of Year | 4,419,031 | 3,633,693 |
| NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR | \$ 4,722,065 | \$ 4,419,031 |

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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Our volunteers make things happen!

Thank you for your commitment to WRLF this past year!

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Kathy McKnight

Nick and Joan Wright

WRLF Board and Emeritus Board

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