



Newsletter

Sheep Hill | 671 Cold Spring Road, Williamstown, MA 01267 | rurallands.org | (413) 458-2494

MAKE A LABYRINTH

Friday, February 18
4:00 p.m. Sheep Hill

Artist Melanie Mowinski will create a snow labyrinth at Sheep Hill with the help of school-aged participants celebrating the beginning of February school break! Hot chocolate will follow.

OWL PROWL

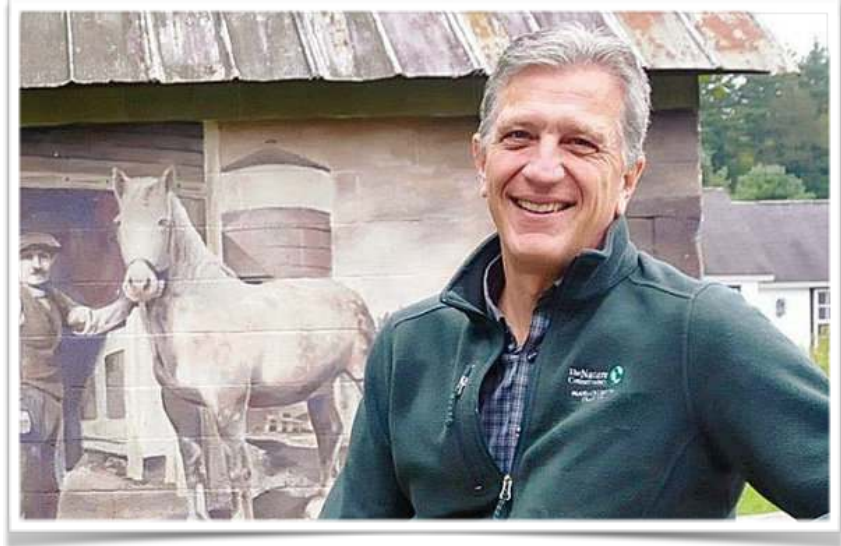
Monday, Feb. 21
6:00-7:30 Sheep Hill

We will host an Owl Prowl for all ages under the (nearly) full moon! David McGowan will lead a group to listen for (and hopefully spot!) a couple of the local resident owls. Campfire and treats will follow!

TALKS ON THE HILL

Thursday, March 3
7:00 Sheep Hill

Looking Back to See Our Future: Tom Johnson has taught on, and led, expeditions to the deep lakes of the world. Tom will discuss New England’s paleoclimatology and what can be learned by “hindcasting,” when scientists compare analysis of tree rings, sediment cores from lakes, oceans, ice cores, and cave deposits.



A fond farewell

From the Director, David McGowan It has been my great pleasure to serve as the Executive Director for Williamstown Rural Lands for nearly five years. I would like to take this opportunity to announce to our membership that, for personal reasons, I will be resigning from my position at the end of the month.

In 2017, the decision to uproot our family from Boston and move to the Berkshires was made easier by this welcoming community. Since moving to Williamstown, we have been blessed with new friendships, sustained by local food, and amazed by the endless beauty of this corner of Massachusetts.

There is so much to love here. Double rainbows towering over Stratton Road. A “Kimburger” from East Mountain Farm, topped with Cricket Creek Tobasi, a side of Caretaker salad, washed down with dry cider from the Berkshire Cider Project. Spring wildflowers and singing warblers along Money Brook. A moose on the loose. Eagles chasing each other over Kite Hill in the twilight. A town with only one traffic light.

Rural Lands plays a role in preserving many of these things – wildlife habitat, productive farmland, healthy watersheds. Land protection, coupled with nature-based education and recreational access to the outdoors, forms the foundation of our work. Many community



**EYES ON THE LAND
BOOK GROUP**

Monthly, 3rd Thursdays
5:30 p.m. Sheep Hill

Join our monthly book group! We read and discuss non-fiction and fiction titles by contemporary authors on environmental and land-use based topics.


SHEEP TO SHAWL

Saturday, May 7
Sheep Hill

Sheep to Shawl is a celebration of New England sheep and wool history that highlights natural fiber, artisans, crafters, local agriculture, and rural living. Farmers will showcase sheep herding and shearing, and artisans will demonstrate spinning and weaving. Come enjoy live music and local food!

Keep in touch!

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members know this and support WRL generously. And this mission has attracted dedicated board members who help advance our cause. An active board and strong member support provide the energy for WRL to thrive.

As I depart, I'm pleased that Rural Lands possesses excellent working relationships with the town, the college, and the community at-large. WRL and the town partner to maintain trails throughout the community, including the Berlin Mountain Recreation Area. WRL hosts summer interns from the college, partners with the Williams Outing Club on a trail crew, and regularly hosts Environmental Planning projects. And last spring, townspeople voted overwhelmingly in support of a WRL-sponsored warrant article to conserve more farmland in town. These strong relationships will serve the new director well.

I will be forever grateful to the excellent WRL staff that I work with. As a newcomer, I would have been lost without Cathy Talarico's hometown knowledge. Her sensitivity, deep dedication to the cause, and hard work ethic make the organization run. Thank you, Cathy. Dan Gura worked on a WRL trail crew when he was at Williams College. Now Dan very ably leads WRL's land stewardship and trail maintenance operations. And in 2021, Rural Lands welcomed back Julia Morgan to lead our public programming efforts. Her Talks on the Hill lecture series has been well attended and received. WRL's terrific staff will ensure a smooth transition in the coming months.

Last year, WRL finished on strong financial footing with an exciting new brand and website in place. The organization is poised to soar under new leadership. I know it will.

