

Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation



preserve
promote
educate

December 2017

Protecting the Rural New England Character of Williamstown Since 1986



2017 trail crew



Tenney sisters & LRE



Marking new Tenney trail



Woodchuck Wednesday splash hike



Honey tasting with Russ Wilson

Dear friends,

What a remarkable year it's been! Twelve months ago, I never would have dreamed that I would be offered the post of Executive Director at Rural Lands and move my family to Williamstown. It's been a whirlwind. I confess to being pulled in a thousand directions – how did Leslie do it all?!? I know there are still properties to walk, people to meet, and programs to schedule, but I am slowly finding my footing. And as the dust clears from my first six months, I am left with the impressions of what WRLF means to the community. Here are a few that stuck with me:

Continued →

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- The enduring appeal of nature. In the photo at left, a monarch butterfly was about to emerge from its chrysalis and these two young girls were not leaving Sheep Hill until it happened. Out of the picture, a baby brother wailed. Still the girls sat. An hour passed, and they remained rapt with attention. Finally, the butterfly emerged. Crumpled and dewy, it slowly unfurled to the girls' amazement. In this age of excess screen time - Butterfly 1: Nintendo o!

- Abundant generosity. Rural Lands was the beneficiary of not one, but two extraordinary donations of land this year. First, Pam Weatherbee donated 64 acres of land at the end of Sweet Brook Road. The property encompasses all of Harmon Pond with lovely views of the Taconic Mountains. Next, Sarah Tenney and Gail Niels Tenney donated 178 acres of land off of Berlin Road to WRLF. The property is surrounded by Taconic Trail State Forest and offers great hiking. The gifts reflect the generosity and abiding conservation ethic of the donors.

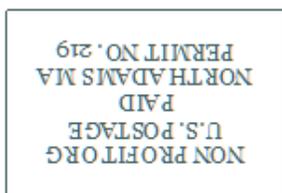
- Trails galore! Dan Gura and his trail crew (Johnny Inoue and Gabe Morosky) worked hard this summer – clearing trails, building bog bridges, even using block and tackle to move large stepping stones in Hemlock Brook. In conjunction with the Williams Outing Club (WOC), WRLF hosted the seasonal trail crew. They completed projects on land owned by the Buxton School, DCR, Williams College, the town, and WRLF – benefitting hikers wherever they roam.

Although it's a small land trust, WRLF generates an outsized impact on the quality of life in Williamstown - conserving important lands, improving trails, and exposing children to the wonder of nature. Thank you for supporting Rural Lands. Please join us for upcoming events and programs in 2018. *David McGowan*

Ring Hikes summary: Williamstown is surrounded by mountains, and one day the WRLF Trails Committee hopes that it will be possible for a hiker to walk a complete ring around the town, crossing from the Greylock Reservation to the Taconics and back again. During 2017 the Trails Committee sponsored a series of five "Ring Hikes" to promote the idea of a future "Ring Trail."

Each hike traced what might be a segment of the "Ring": 1) from Mt. Greylock down the Roaring Brook Trail to Roaring Brook Rd; 2) from Oblong Rd. up the Phelps Trail and along the Taconic Crest Trail over Berlin Mtn. to Petersburg Pass; 3) from Petersburg Pass along the Taconic Crest to the Birch Brook Trail and down to Hopkins Forest; 4) from Chestnut St. up the Chestnut and Class of '98 Trails to the AT, 5) and from there along the AT over East Mtn. and down to Rt. 2 in North Adams; and from Pattison Rd. up the AT to finish the "Ring" at the starting point, Mt. Greylock. The Committee will announce plans for the 2018 series of "Ring Hikes" in the new year. *Dusty Griffin, Trails Committee Chair*

Note: WRLF's 2016 annual report is available online at: wrlf.org. Hard copies with donor list may be requested by calling: 458.2494



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