



# Pinnacle News

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

SPRING 2015

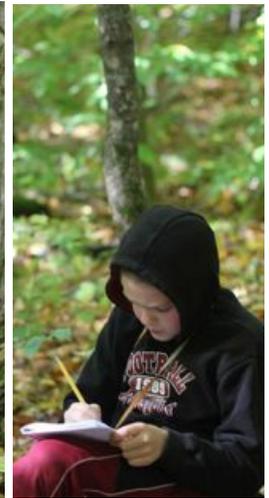
## Students & Nature

For two years WHPA has been working with The Nature Museum at Grafton to provide naturalist-led trips to the Pinnacle several times a year for Westminster third- and fourth-graders. While details of the education program change from time to time, constant is WHPA's belief in the importance of outdoor instruction and play. A snowshoe trip this past winter was a first-time experience for a majority of the third-graders. Because the focus was more on physical logistics than nature study, the trip was led by teachers with parental and para help.

According to Steven Tullar, Principal of Westminster Schools, "We use the hikes for multiple reasons with science and social education most directly. These hikes connect children to the community through experiencing the natural environment. Multiple hikes

throughout the year provide ways for children to see snapshots of the area (plants, terrain, animals, etc.) at different times of the year. Students build observation skills and record observations to help process what they are seeing and experiencing.

"Teachers and students provide a range of feedback on the trips. For some students, it is their only time in getting out into a natural setting. They are excited about the hikes – and use those connections in other learning. While there are always one or two children who are reluctant participants, by the time they have experienced the Pinnacle over two years, they are enthusiastic about the hikes. And they certainly are more connected to nature."



### INVITATION TO MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

#### Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association Annual Meeting Program and Refreshments

Sunday April 26, 2015, 4 PM

Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street, Saxtons River

#### AGENDA

4:00 PM Reports and Minutes on view upstairs

4:30 PM Business Meeting: Highlights, Next Projects, Elections, Volunteer of the Year Award; Artists and Pinnacle Places

5:30-7 PM Artist Reception and Exhibit in new MSA section. Works on sale benefit artists, Main Street Arts, Pinnacle Assoc.

For more information, visit [www.windmillhillpinnacle.org](http://www.windmillhillpinnacle.org)

## Recent Highlights

**Trails.** The snowy, long-lasting winter of 2014-15 put a check on trailwork, but our trusty volunteers will soon make up for lost time. Certain trails and roads can be perilous during muddy weather. Check the website for trail/road closings.

**Athens Dome.** Come good weather, Boy Scout Troop 206 from Chester will continue work at the log lean-to shelter near the lookout above Creature Rock in Grafton. First on the agenda is framing for a metal roof. Meanwhile our volunteers are creating new signs for a variety of locations.

**Bald Hill.** As a result of Stewart Read's volunteer work, Bald Hill Conservation Committee, in partnership with the Bellows Falls Historical Society, was successful in getting the Westminster Selectboard to designate an historic trail along the north bank of the Saxtons River as a "legal trail" from Granger Street upstream through a gorge toward the open fields of Basin Farm. This important trail segment will be shown on future Westminster Town road maps, significantly facilitating the connection by trail of Historical Society's Connecticut River park with Basin Farm, the High School Forest, and Bald Hill.

## Unlikely Nurseries

Thirty-five people came to the Putney Library on March 23 for Patti Smith's vernal pool slide presentation, co-sponsored by the Pinnacle Association, Putney Mountain Association [PMA], and Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center [BEEC]. BEEC Naturalist Smith focused on mysterious and often overlooked fairy shrimp. (After a brief six-week life cycle, they produce eggs, which need to be dried out and frozen, but then are viable for up to 15 years. Meanwhile, seemingly fragile salamanders can live up to 20 years!) Smith has been involved with vernal pool monitoring for 15 years. Unlike other programs, which identify but do not follow through on pools in subsequent years, the PMA/WHPA monitoring program has visited the same pools for 15 years. Volunteers interested in joining that monitoring program should contact Catherine Cooper-Ellis at [coopere@gmail.com](mailto:coopere@gmail.com). Volunteers interested in helping with salamander crossings should visit [www.beec.org](http://www.beec.org) and email Patti Smith.



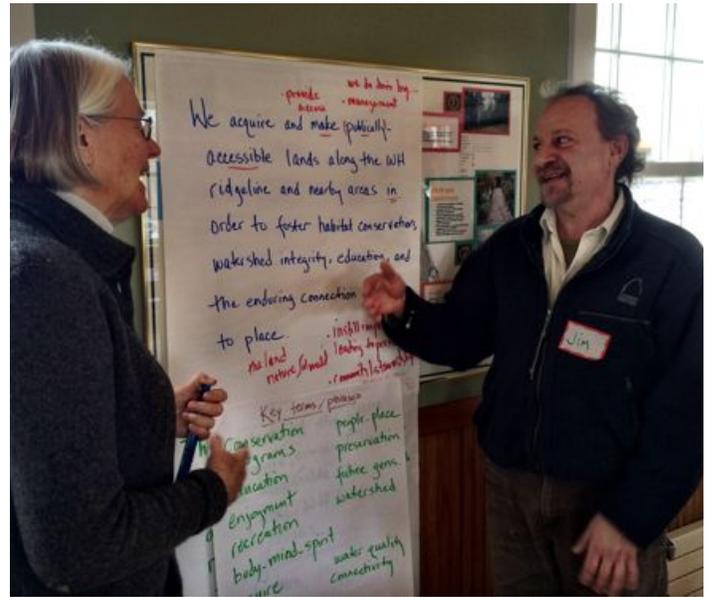
## From the Board

**Online Donations.** Coming in April! We're in the final stages of working out the details and design to allow supporters to donate online.



**Board Retreat.** Winter is always the quiet time on Windmill Hill Ridge. But for the WHPA trustees, it has been a productive season spent evaluating our activities, capacities, and dreams. On March 21, the first full day of spring, twelve trustees gathered at the Friends Meeting House in Putney to wrap up the strategic planning process. With most of the ridgeline land now conserved and connected, WHPA will focus on the stewardship of the land and our organization over the next 3-5 years. Many thanks to WHPA trustee Jim Jordan and retreat facilitator Debby Bergh for guiding us through this process. We now have the goals and strategies that will inform our work through 2020.

Susan Roman  
WHPA Chair



Debby Bergh and Jim Jordan review priorities at the Board Retreat.

## Annual Meeting & Art Exhibit

In the theater room of Main Street Arts [MSA], where the annual meeting will be held, student art from Westminster elementary students will be displayed. Speakers will address their experiences on Pinnacle lands and how their visits have inspired their art. It will be interesting for those in the audience to then go to the art exhibit in the new section of MSA to see the artworks displayed and relate the scenes depicted there to those places they have visited. Many of the works will be for sale and will provide a lasting memory of special scenes and encounters.

At left, an ephemeral forest vernal pool, home to many small, specialized creatures that are an important part of the food chain.

## Schedule of Events: Weekend Strolls and More

For more information and directions, visit [www.windmillhillpinnacle.org](http://www.windmillhillpinnacle.org) or contact the program person listed below.

**April 25, Saturday, 11 AM. Walk to Vernal Pool.** Meet leaders Catherine Cooper-Ellis and Bill Clark at Westminster West Church to carpool to Bemis Hill Road parking. Wear waterproof boots, bring water. Register at [ccoopere@gmail.com](mailto:ccoopere@gmail.com). Rain date: Sunday April 26.



**April 26, Sunday, 2-3:30 PM. Athens Dome Hike.** Occasionally steep 2-mile hike to Creature Rock, summit lookout and shelter site, old beaver wetland, and tumbling Ledge Brook. Dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes, bring water. Meet at trailhead parking on Ledge Road, one mile in off Route 121/35 in Grafton. Contact Silos Roberts at 802-869-1388.

**April 26, Sunday, 4 PM. Artist Program and Exhibit, Annual Meeting, Refreshments.** A short business meeting will be followed by remarks from students and artists about the association between their art and Pinnacle properties. Art exhibit and artist reception are 5:30-7 PM. See invitation on page 1 of the newsletter. The exhibit is open to the public during MSA hours and will end on May 22.

**May 2, Saturday, 2-4 PM. Spring Wildflower Walk.** This favorite off-trail stroll with Libby Mills and Carol Westing will feature forest ephemeral spring flowers. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool to the start. Wear waterproof shoes. Bring camera and water. Register with Libby Mills at 802-387-5596 or [libbym680@comcast.net](mailto:libbym680@comcast.net). Rain date: Sunday May 3.



**May 10, Sunday, 7 AM. Early Morning Birding Walk.** Richard Foye, birder extraordinaire, will help fine-tune your birding-by-ear skills on a loop walk from Holden Trail to the Pinnacle cabin and back. Meet at the Holden Trail kiosk. Bring binoculars. Register with Sarah Waldo at 802-387-6036 or [sarah\\_waldo@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah_waldo@hotmail.com).

**May 16, Saturday, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM. Hike to Champion White Ash.** Forester Arthur Westing will lead a walk to the largest White Ash in Vermont and discuss the factors that make its success possible. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool. Register with Arthur Westing at 802-387-2152 or [westing@sover.net](mailto:westing@sover.net). Rain date: Sunday May 17.

**June 6, Saturday, 10 AM. Cellar Hole Walk.** Bob Hass will lead this walk to some ruins off the old Holden Road. Meet at the Westminster West Church to carpool. Register with Bob Hass at 802-387-5778.

**June 27, Saturday, 9 AM-2 PM. Over the Hill Hike!** Tony Coven will lead this north/south hike. Bring water, lunch, snack, insect repellent, sunscreen. Meet at the Holden Trail Kiosk. Register with Tony Coven at 802-387-6650.

**July 10, Friday, 9 AM-2 PM. Take a Kid for a Hike Day.** Leaders Tony Coven and Elaine Gordon. Hike goes to Pinnacle lookout and back via Holden Trail. Wear sturdy sneakers or walking shoes, and long pants. Bring water, bag lunch, snack, repellent, sunscreen. Joint program with the Westminster Schools Summer Camp. Non-campers are welcome, but need to bring an adult. Contact [Elaine.gordon@wnesu.com](mailto:Elaine.gordon@wnesu.com) for information and registration.

**September 19, Saturday, 10:45 AM-4 PM. Accessibility Day.** This once-a-year opportunity for a vehicle ride to a special trail site will go to Paul's Ledges for lunch via an often rough road. The program's popularity and need for four-wheel-drive vehicles make advance registrations a MUST for riders. Hikers do not need to pre-register. Bring water, bag lunch, and sweater for chilly weather. Meet at Westminster West Church at 10:45 AM or at Athens Dome trailhead on Route 35, opposite Sleepy Valley Road, at 11 AM to carpool. Register with Bev Major at 802-387-5737.

**October 17, Saturday, 2-4 PM. Bald Hill Hike.** This moderate hike may include a new trail, Twin Falls, and Bald Hill viewpoints. Meet at the gate at the end of Cemetery Road in Westminster. Wear waterproof shoes, bring water. Contact Randy Major at 802-387-5737.



**November 7, Saturday, 1-3 PM. Spruce Swamp Hike.** Camilla Roberts will lead this excursion to a Spruce Swamp in Athens. Dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes, bring water. Meet at parking lot opposite The Nature Museum, 186 Townshend Road in Grafton. Contact Camilla Roberts at 802-869-1388 for information and registration.

## What's in a Name?

How did Pinnacle trails get their names? In this newsletter, we'll reveal the history for four of them as noted by Arthur H. Westing, WHPA Co-Founder and Trustee Emeritus.

**A Walk through Time Trail:** This 3.7-mile self-guided trail in Westminster now has 15 labeled stations that present the natural and cultural history of the land. Created in 2004 as a 7th- and 8th-grade project of the Compass School of Westminster under the joint guidance of the Vermont Institute of Natural Science [VINS] in Quechee and WHPA, it has since been augmented somewhat by Trustees of WHPA.

**Dunn Nature Trail:** This 1.33-mile self-guided nature trail in Westminster, with its 14 labeled stations within the Stephen Martin Memorial Sanctuary, was named in memory of Richard Byam Dunn, Sr. (1913–2002) and his wife Margaret Myers Dunn (1916–2003) of Massachusetts – lovers of nature and valued members of WHPA. The trail was created in 2006 by a committee of WHPA trustees.

**Five Corners:** This is an intersection (elevation, about 1,350 feet) where one road and four trails all meet. To the east of that intersection lies Westminster, and to the west of it Brookline. The intersection represents the southwest corner of the WHPA Reserve. Approaching the intersection from the east is the unmaintained Class 4 Town of Westminster Holden Road there coinciding with the Putney Mountain Association [PMA] Ed Dodd Trail; approaching it from the west is the unmaintained legal Town of Brookline Windmill Hill Trail; approaching it from the north (within Brookline) is the PMA Pinnacle Trail; approaching it from the south (within Westminster) is the PMA Ridgeline Trail; and approaching it from the southwest (within Brookline) is the PMA West Cliff Trail. The distance from Five Corners north to the Pinnacle (elevation, about 1,683 feet) is 2.5 miles; and from Five Corners south to Putney Mountain (elevation, about 1,682 feet) is 2.1 miles.

**Flame Trail:** This 0.2-mile trail in Athens was named after a horse that had been owned by the prior owner of the land through which it runs, and that had often been allowed to run loose along it.



## Entries from Pinnacle Cabin Notebooks

Some write a little, some a lot. They celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, reunions, nature, first day off from a new job, friends and relatives who are gone, memories, winter solstice, Christmas, New Year's Day, friendship, love, honeymoons, camping under the stars, getting braces off teeth, and so much more. They come in all kinds of weather and all seasons from far and near: signing Africa, Egypt, Mozambique, Norway, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Maine, California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Washington, DC, Brooklyn via Colorado and Arkansas, Kansas, North Carolina, Nebraska, Texas, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington State, Wisconsin, and Vermont.



*I relish this beautiful moment. I relish this magical place. With my two companions trotting beside me we descend leaving no trace.*



**CLARITY!**

*Haven't felt this much bliss in complete isolation in weeks. Sometimes you've got to get a little lost to remember where you want to go. Thanks for the incredible space and magnificent view. Forever Green Mountain State! (for now anyway)*



*This morning I woke to the realization of friendship's place in my life*

*Years and years have passed, each one paring from a list I did not know was mine*

*Trading passion for peace is not easy, especially for me, but a trade has been made, and I feel free*

*Thank you to three wonderful, warm, and wise women in my life, It took all of you to help me see.*

*And now I do....*

*I am a very very very very very lucky man!*

*Endless gratitude...endless!*



*So beautiful. Colorado hikes are lovely but the diversity of plant and wildlife here in Vermont and on this trail is stunning.*

*Breathtaking vistas; magical meadows; majestic trees.*

*Thank you, Nature!*

### Wanted: Your Email

We've gone digital! If you haven't sent us your email address, please do. We're working with a digital contact system that will send you our newsletter and certain updates or last-minute notices of special events. This means faster contact with you while saving time, money, and trees.



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