



Cabin Restoration

Holden Trail winds its way through woods. Suddenly the world opens up. You catch your breath at the amazing view before you and may hardly notice the log cabin nestled behind it. Yet, for some the cabin is as important as the view.

What is that building for you? Refuge from the elements? Retreat from the pressures of life? Place of solace, solitude, or celebration? Is it filled with memories or does it promise something new, pulsing with potential? Do you want to visit it alone or with your faithful dog, family, or friends, good friends? This wonderful and personal oasis appeals in so many different ways to its visitors. No matter if you are a rough camper or prefer the snazziest hotel, the cabin is a positive symbol of peace, independence, and love of nature, home, and friends.

But those of us who care about it must care for it. Aware that the years have weathered the cabin, built in 1964 and transformed into a three-sided shelter in 1999, we're investigating its needy foundation and basic structure. What must we do to make sure that this simple treasure will be here this fall, this decade, this life to inspire and delight its visitors and future generations?

Responsible renovation requires robust repairs.

- Remove west stone masonry wall down to grade and rebuild wall with new granite lintels
- Install new lintels top and bottom of new west windows
- Remove west interior wood wall
- Rebuild stone corners of NE and SE stone foundations
- Weld steel patches into back of steel fireplace insert
- Reframe and replace all windows with polycarbonate
- Affix ladder to outside of east wall for fire escape from loft window
- Remove outhouse roof and replace with metal roofing

The Cabin Renovation Committee has chosen well-respected mason, welder, and timber framer Phil Pellerin as contractor. Phil is a Westminster West resident and 40-year visitor to the shelter. Elizabeth and Jonas Littman, who gifted the cabin and its 47 acres to WHPA in 1997, have generously given Phil permission to pass throughout their property to transport materials for the project. As plans are finalized, we'll share them with you because we'll need your help to make this restoration possible.



Carpenter Phil Pellerin inspects the west wall that will be rebuilt from the ground up and have new granite lintels.

INVITATION TO MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

**Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association Forest Walk,
Annual Meeting, Cellar Hole Program**

**Sunday April 24, 2016, 2 PM and 4 PM
Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street, Saxtons River**

AGENDA

2:00 PM Walk: Forest Management for Conservation & Wildlife

4:00 PM Reports and Minutes on view upstairs, Refreshments

**4:30 PM Business Meeting: Highlights, Next Projects, Elections,
Volunteer of the Year Award**

5:00 PM Slide Program on Local Cellar Holes by Richard Ewald

For information, see Schedule of Events and visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org.

Recent Highlights

Trails. Old laminated paper and plywood signs are being replaced by new hand-painted signs. When the trails dry out, water bars on Holden Trail and others will be cleaned and repaired, and side-hilling done on some of the newer trails.



Athens Dome. Soon Boy Scout Troop 206 from Chester will start framing for a metal roof at the log lean-to shelter near the lookout above Creature Rock in Grafton. A date will be announced when volunteers will take materials to the site.

Proposed Trail from Athens to Saxtons River. In October a group of Pinnacle Board Members, Rockingham Conservation Commission members, and other interested residents of Rockingham and Westminster met at Main Street Arts in Saxtons River to discuss the potential for a new trail to connect the Pinnacle ridgeline trail to Bald Hill. Visit [News & Projects](#) on our website to read more about this exciting possibility.

WHPA Partners with VCF

By investing some of our endowment with the Vermont Community Foundation [VCF], the Pinnacle Association has gained access to the donor-advising services offered by VCF. Consequently WHPA can now offer planned-giving options, such as charitable gift annuities; and donors can contribute appreciated property, such as securities or real estate, receive a charitable deduction for the full market value of the asset, and pay no capital gains tax on the transfer. Donors who establish a life-income gift receive a tax deduction for the full, fair market value of the assets contributed, minus the present value of the income interest retained; if they fund their gift with appreciated property, they pay no upfront capital gains tax on the transfer. Gifts payable to charity upon the donor's death, such as a bequest or a beneficiary designation in a life insurance policy or retirement account, do not generate a lifetime income tax deduction for the donor, but they are exempt from estate tax.

All the Board Members who met with Emilye Pelow Corbett were encouraged by what they learned. Said Rick Cowan: "I learned that you don't have to be wealthy to take advantage of planned giving. Having VCF's expertise and accounting apparatus at our disposal will strengthen WHPA, enabling us to protect more land and offer more people access to untrammelled nature."

Silos Roberts stated: "My take on the meeting is that most of the folks we will encounter through the Pinnacle that are looking for some sort of legacy gift will fit into the Charitable Gift Annuity category, given the low initial investment and guaranteed lifetime return."

From the Board

Internal Affairs. WHPA recently purchased a web-based data software program that will allow multiple authorized Pinnacle users to better access and manage data, thereby improving record keeping and our relationships with members, donors, and volunteers. A data transfer from the old program to the new, highly recommended one is underway. Meanwhile the Access Points map is being updated to show the more northerly additions, and Board Member Andy Toepfer has tracked all land purchases, maps, and conditional uses since 2000 and referenced them on a spreadsheet so the history of those parcels is complete and accessible.

Strategic Plan 2015-2020. In crafting a new 5-year plan, WHPA trustees focused on identifying initiatives that would strengthen their stewardship of the organization and the land. As a result, board and leadership development, endowment growth, strategic land acquisition, and enhanced fundraising activities have become our priorities.

Susan Roman, WHPA Chair



At left, Emilye Pelow Corbett, Philanthropic Advisor for the Vermont Community Foundation [VCF], met in Middlebury with Susan Roman of WHPA, at right, and also with Pinnacle Board Members Rick Cowan, Silos Roberts, Andy Toepfer, and Sarah Waldo to discuss the benefits of investing a portion of WHPA's endowment with VCF.

Planned Giving Comes to WHPA

Thanks to a new partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation [VCF], WHPA members can now make gifts that support the Association's work while gaining income and tax advantages: from a bequest, to including WHPA as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy or retirement account, to charitable gift annuities (CGAs) or charitable remainder trusts (CRTs). While some planned gifts, such as charitable gift annuities, provide lifelong income to the donor, others use estate- and tax-planning techniques to provide for charity and other heirs in ways that maximize the gift and/or minimize its impact on the donor's estate.

Members interested in exploring these options are invited to contact Rick Cowan by phone at 802-869-1681 or by email at whpa@sover.net. More information is also available on the Pinnacle website.

Schedule of Events: Weekend Strolls and More

For more information and directions, visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org or contact the program person listed below.

April 24, Sunday, 2 PM. The Whys and Hows of Forest Management for Conservation. Forester Silos Roberts and Andy Toepfer, who does natural resource mapping and cartography, will lead this hike to sites illustrative of decisions and actions taken by WHPA to show the management of property for conservation and wildlife. Meet at Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street in Saxtons River. Wear waterproof footwear. You'll return in time for the Annual Meeting and program on cellar holes. Please register in advance with Silos Roberts at 802-869-1388.



April 24, Sunday, 4 PM. Pinnacle Annual Meeting and Cellar Hole Slide Program. Refreshments. A short business meeting will be followed by a slide program by author and renowned architectural historian Richard Ewald on "Looking into Cellar Holes: Foundations of Extremely Local History." The events will take place at Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street in Saxtons River. Members and the public are encouraged to attend to learn about the ruins that permeate so many of our local woodlands and about the plans the Pinnacle Association has for the coming year.

April 30, Saturday, 9:30 AM-noon. Spring Wildflower Walk. Libby Mills and Carol Westing will lead this discovery of early-blooming spring flowers. This earlier program hour will feature plants looking to the east for the morning sun. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool to the start. Wear waterproof shoes. Bring camera and water. For questions or registration, contact Libby Mills at 802-387-5596, libbym680@comcast.net or Carol Westing at 802-387-2152, cew@sover.net. Rain date: Sunday May 1.



May 21, Saturday, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM. Hike to Champion White Ash. See our giant in all its leafy glory. Forester Arthur Westing will again lead a walk to the largest White Ash in Vermont and discuss the factors that make its record-breaking success possible. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool. Register with Arthur Westing at 802-387-2152 or westing@sover.net. Rain date: Sunday May 22.

June 4, Saturday, 10 AM-12:30 PM. Cellar Holes of Old Grafton. Richard Warren will lead this walk to the ruins of the small settlement of Old Grafton. Meet at the parking lot opposite The Nature Museum, 176 Townshend Road in Grafton, to carpool. Register with Bev Major at 802-387-5737.

June 26, Sunday, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM. Over the Hill Hike! Tony Coven will lead this hike over the ridge and past an abandoned beaver pond. Bring water, lunch, snack, insect repellent, sunscreen. Meet at Westminster West Church to split cars and carpools between the start at Latham and finish at Holden. Register with Coven at 802-387-6650.

September 18, Sunday, 10:45 or 11 AM-2 PM. Accessibility Day. This is a once-a-year opportunity for a ride to remote Paul's Ledges for lunch. 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 the Athens Dome trailhead on Route 35, opposite Sleepy Valley Road, at 11 AM to carpool. Register with Bev Major at 802-387-5737.

October 15, Saturday, 1-4 PM. Athens Dome Bear Hill Hike to Grafton Overlook. Camilla Roberts and Paul Wilson will lead hikers from Turner Hill Road steeply uphill over ledges to the summit, through spruce groves and fern glens on a beautiful trail with a NW view of Target Rock. The hike will end at Kidder Hill Road and involve a shuttle back with cars. Dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes, bring water. Park in the lot opposite The Nature Museum, 186 Townshend Road in Grafton. Please register with Paul Wilson at 802-869-1166 or wilsonupaul@gmail.com.

November 5, Saturday, 10 AM-noon. Bald Hill Hike. This moderate hike will explore both uplands and the river path of Bald Hill Reserve, as well as a new trail. Meet at Bald Hill kiosk on Covered Bridge Road in Westminster. Wear waterproof shoes, bring water. Contact Vanessa Stern at 802-463-4948 or davidandvanessa@gmail.com.



Clearing for Wildlife

At left, WHPA volunteers Phil Ranney, Silos Roberts, and Tony Coven (Andy Toepfer took the pictures, and Hayden and Tracy Lake were also involved in the cutting projects) clear a section of Pinnacle lands north of Paul's Ledges on the ridgeline. Three and a half days of cutting trees last fall created five acres of new openings in the Pinnacle ridgeline forest to enhance wildlife habitat. These clearings will provide different habitat to attract birds dependent upon young forests, plus browse for deer and moose, new growth of berries, and plant food for a variety of wildlife. Forest age structure will be diversified as the clearings develop a new growth of young trees that are under-represented in the main ridgeline forest.

At right, felled low-quality trees allow sunlight to penetrate the forest floor. Resultant increased berries and insects in the fallen woody debris will benefit birds and the whole food web. Through a grant contract with NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), the cutting by Pinnacle volunteers will add money to the endowment fund to cover taxes and insurance on the 1800+ acres of WHPA lands. More work to open an additional two acres will be done as soon as mud season is over. Once those remaining acres are completed, the Pinnacle Association may decide to add additional openings along the ridge to enhance wildlife habitat. If you notice an increase in birds and other wildlife along the ridgeline, we'd be curious to know the species you see and the location of the additional activity.

Turner Hill Wildlife Management Area

Because of adjacent WHPA lands, Pinnacle Board Member Andy Toepfer has met with Vermont Stewardship Forester Tim Morton and State Wildlife Biologist Chris Bernier to discuss the best location for a hiking trail on the 1090-acre Turner Hill Wildlife Management Area that was bought in 2011-2015 by the State of Vermont. Managed jointly by two State departments – Forests, Parks and Recreation and Fish and Wildlife – the lands will be maintained for historic preservation, wildlife management, and public access. A starting point has not yet been determined for the hiking trail, which could also provide a way for hunters to gain access to the general property. As plans for the area are solidified, we will share more details.



At right, Westminster students on a visit to the Pinnacle cabin and overlook.



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Wanted: Your Email

Please send us your email or any changes to it so we can forward our newsletter, updates, or last-minute notices of special events. We love faster contact while saving time, money, and trees.

FYI. The third edition of *Woodland Secrets for Southeastern Vermont and a Bit Beyond*, Oct. 2015, 68 pp., by WHPA Co-founder, Trustee Emeritus, and frequent newsletter and website contributor Arthur Westing is now available as a PDF gratis upon request for personal use (contact: westing@sover.net). Hard copies are available at nominal cost.