



Pinnacle News

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

SPRING 2017

Two Wonderful Gifts from Loyal Friends

Marion Berry Bequest

The Berry Family moved to Westminster from Portsmouth, NH, in 1977. Son, Tom, graduated from Bellows Falls Union High School in 1980, sharing his love and respect for the outdoors with his parents and friends. After majoring in Geology and Biology at Bowdoin College, he moved to the Bay Area in California in 1984 and has worked as an environmental consultant and Professional Geologist on contaminated site remediation ever since.

Arthur and Marion Berry moved to Maine, Arthur's home state, in 1985, but they always remembered those young people they knew who loved the land and were actively dedicated to conservation within their community. Especially inspired by Judy Anderson, a great friend and student who lived in Westminster West and her passion for conservation in the earliest days of the Pinnacle Association in the 1990s, first Arthur and then Marion left bequests to WHPA, and Tom includes WHPA as part of his family's annual charitable giving. The recent bequest from Marion is the largest ever received by the Pinnacle Association and honors, both practically and philosophically, those Vermont conservation memories, Judy Anderson, the Pinnacle Association, and Pinnacle's mission.

(Continued on back page)

Radford Land Gift in Brookline

Some years ago Terry and Edna Radford of Atlanta, GA, purchased a rustic cabin and 69 acres on Mountain Road in Brookline as a rural retreat. They had been attracted to the property because it borders Pinnacle lands and its extensive trail system. They bought the property and joined WHPA.

At the time of that purchase, Terry expressed his hope to someday donate a portion of the upper acreage to the Pinnacle Association. A few years later, a neighboring 16-acre parcel came on the market. Terry realized that it would provide a trail corridor from the Cascade Trail down to Grassy Brook Road. He bought the land with the intention of donating it to WHPA for a new trail that would provide improved access from Grassy Brook Road and parts west while expanding the protected habitat of the larger WHPA holdings. That 16-acre lot is part of the 50.1 acres the Radfords recently donated.

Roger Haydock has already flagged the proposed trail route and reports that it will be among the more dramatic trails in our system, due to its picturesque descent from the ridgeline, overlooks, switchbacks, and balconies – ending in a foot bridge that will be built across Grassy Brook to connect

(Continued on back page)



Cabin Celebration!

The Pinnacle Cabin is beautifully finished and eager for guests. Come celebrate workers, volunteers, and supporters who made it possible on Saturday June 17 at 2 PM. Visit our website later on for details.

INVITATION TO MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association Annual Meeting and Program: Abenaki in Vermont

Sunday April 30, 2017, 4 PM
Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street, Saxtons River

AGENDA

- 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 We Are Still Here – Abenaki Culture and Contemporary Issues
- For information, see Schedule of Events and visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org.

Recent Highlights

Trails. The Trails Committee mapped, cleared, and marked a rerouted section of the Headwaters Trail. The original trail closely followed an old, fairly steep east-west road which – after years of snow melt, rainfall, and foot traffic – had become badly eroded. The old water bars could no longer manage the flow of spring run-off and heavy rains. The new section forks to the north, just a bit west of the intersection with the Holden Trail, and then loops back near the brook crossing. In other efforts, progress was made on opening up a few key areas for wildlife enhancement. See photo below.

The name of the Pinnacle Trail, which runs from 5 Corners to the Pinnacle Cabin, has been changed to the Ridgeline Trail. This was done to create greater continuity along the Windmill Ridge for hikers and to recognize the interconnectedness of Putney Mountain Association and WHPA lands. With this name change, the main north-south trail from Putney Mountain to the Pinnacle has the same name. Maps and trail signage will be updated this spring.

Athens Dome. The new log lean-to shelter near the lookout above Creature Rock in Grafton will have a memorial plaque in honor of dedicated Athens Dome Committee member Ray Hitchcock, who died on November



20, 2016. Ray was a key committee member – designing connecting trails and information pages for maps, shepherding the Act 250 process, and suggesting proper handicapped access to appropriate Pinnacle properties. With the good weather, we anticipate work will start on the installation of the floor and chinking of the log walls.

Below, the chain saw crew (l-r, Hayden Lake, Silos Roberts, Andy Toepfer, Tony Coven, and Phil Ranney) prepares to cut away select trees and brush for the last of three wildlife-enhancement projects in the Windmill Ridge area.



From the Board

Gifts of Love. The restoration of the Pinnacle Cabin is complete, so we're planning a celebration! Years ago that original cabin, that view, and that beautiful land were made possible by a series of gifts from people who appreciated a young man's love of nature and a very special place. Now we've come full circle as in this newsletter we celebrate the completion of the cabin renovation and two recent gifts made possible by adults who remembered children in nature, knew so personally what the natural world meant to them, and valued the experience enough to provide lasting tangible help to make that experience possible for others.



The newly renovated cabin is, for the second time, a gift of love from the workers, volunteers, and supporters who appreciated it for making visitors feel at home in nature. The \$10,000 bequest by Marion Berry will allow the Pinnacle Association to reach out to more people to introduce them to the land and entice them to become stewards of its resources. The Radford gift of land will make public access to one section of the Pinnacle trail system easier for the Brookline community, increase trail options for other hikers, and preserve important habitat. In different ways these gifts were all inspired by young people and their love of nature. We at the Pinnacle are determined to encourage and sustain that love and commitment to caring. (Please check the programs listed for April 7 and September 14.)

Rick Cowan, WHPA Chair

Report from VT Trails & Greenways Council

New data prove VT trails contribute to more jobs and a growing "outdoor recreation economy." Read more at <https://vtdigger.org/tag/vermont-trails-greenways-council/>.

News about IRA Rollover and Required Minimum Distribution

Under the 2015 Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act [PATH], the IRA Charitable Rollover is extended permanently. As a result, you or your spouse (if over age 70 1/2) can authorize your IRA/Roth custodian or plan administrator to make a qualified charitable distribution directly to WHPA, and that tax-free donation can count toward your Required Minimum Distribution [RMD]. Please note that if you take the distribution yourself and then gift it or direct the distribution through a donor advised fund, the amount will count as taxable income. For more information, please contact Rick Cowan at 802-869-1681 or whpawsover.net.

Schedule of Free Events: Weekend Strolls and More

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

March 29, Wednesday, 6:30 PM. Saxtons River Valley Trails Initiative Meeting. Public forum on where a trail could go from Bellows Falls Historic Riverfront Park through Bald Hill Reserve to Saxtons River. Maps will be available for discussion with a brief presentation at 7 PM. Light refreshments. Meet on third floor of Rockingham Public Library. Co-sponsored by WHPA, Bald Hill Conservation Committee, and Rockingham Conservation Commission.



Proposed trail will pass under the RR trestle and Route 5 bridge in Bellows Falls.

April 7, Friday, 7 PM. Into the Woods with Our Children – Presentation by Lynn Levine.

Renowned naturalist, author, and professional forester Lynn Levine will reveal her hands-on approach to awakening in youngsters an enduring love of the natural world that will inspire them to leave their electronic devices behind and go into the woods. Hosted by Windham Regional Woodlands Association and co-sponsored by WHPA and others, the presentation will take place at Vermont Learning Collaborative, 471 US Route 5, Dummerston, VT.

April 22, Saturday, 10 AM-noon. Vernal Pool Walk on Earth Day. Becky Chalmers, Wetland Ecologist for VT Agency of Natural Resources, will discuss the life cycles of animals found in vernal pools and Vermont's rules to protect those special places and their inhabitants. All ages are welcome. Wear waterproof boots. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool. No bug repellent allowed on your hands if you wish to handle creatures we find. Register at 802-869-1166 or at wilsonupaul@gmail.com.



April 30, Sunday, 4-6 PM. Pinnacle Annual Meeting and Program: We Are Still Here – Abenaki Culture and Contemporary Issues. Rich Holschuh, who serves on the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs, and Roger Longtoe Sheehan – Abenaki artist, native musician, and educator, as well as Chief of the El-Nu Abenaki Tribe – will speak on the Abenaki Heritage in Vermont, their relation to the land, and their efforts to reclaim their culture. At Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street in Saxtons River. Members and the public are encouraged to attend to learn about Vermont's Native Americans and about plans the Pinnacle Association has for the coming year. Refreshments will be served, and maps will be on display before the program.



May 6, Saturday, 9:30 AM-noon. Spring Wildflower Walk. Libby Mills and Carol Westing will lead this favorite stroll to discover delicate ephemeral flowers of the hardwood forest. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool to the mystery site. Wear waterproof shoes. Bring camera and water. For questions and requested registration, contact westing@sover.net. Rain date: Sunday May 7 at 10 AM.

May 14, Saturday, 8-9:30 PM. Moonlight Hike at Bald Hill. Nocturnal adventure with Vanessa Stern, member of the Bald Hill Conservation Committee and WHPA Board. Everything looks different by moonlight. Wear waterproof shoes. Meet at Bald Hill kiosk on Covered Bridge Road in Westminster. Contact Vanessa Stern at 802-463-4948 to register, get information, or check on the weather.

May 20, Saturday, 9:30 AM-noon. Hike to Champion White Ash. Forester Arthur Westing and wife, Carol, will 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 westing@sover.net. Rain date: Sunday May 21 at 10 AM.



June 17, Saturday, 2 PM. Cabin Celebration! Rain or shine. Revel with friends, food, and live music at our renovated cabin at the amazing Pinnacle overlook. Meet those who made the improvements possible. **Carpooling is essential.** Check the website for information and register so we know how much food to provide. Email whpap@sover.net or call 802-463-9226.

June 24, Saturday, 9:30 AM-1 PM. Over the Hill Hike! Enjoy a 4-mile hike on the Jamie Latham Trail, past an old beaver pond and stone walls, through beautiful hardwood stands, with a stop to enjoy the view from the newly renovated Pinnacle Cabin. 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 Tony Coven at 802-387-6650.

SAVE THE DATE: September 14, 7 PM. Wet Sneakers and Muddy Clothes: The Importance of Nature-Based Play and Education. Presentation by well-known author, teacher, and nature activist David Sobel at Compass School.

Berry Bequest (Con't.)

To the Pinnacle Association and its volunteers – who are active stewards of the land and its resources and who work to expand protected lands and opportunities for people to interact with nature – Marion Berry's personal bequest is particularly meaningful. It speaks to heart and soul at the core of Pinnacle's mission and attests to the value of Pinnacle's efforts past, present, and future. WHPA is most grateful for Arthur and Marion's signals of trust and confidence, and also for Tom Berry's continued support.

For more on Marion, read "A Gift Remembering a Special Place and Friend" on our website.



Scientist Marion Berry was also an artist known for her beautiful Ukrainian eggs, knitted hats and sweaters, and other crafts. Every day, in big and small ways, she acted to make the world better and more beautiful while conserving its natural resources. By her gift, she ensures that WHPA can continue its positive work and involve more people of all ages with the land.

WHPA Annual Board Retreat

This year's Board Retreat took place on January 29 at the Friends Meetinghouse on Route 5 in Putney. Attendees also included members of the Putney Mountain Association [PMA]. The main focus was on the future of land trusts and how to provide for their long-term sustainability.

The opening map exercise – to view a large area of common interest to WHPA and PMA in terms of what has been protected by various private, state, and federal entities and what ideally should be protected because of topography, special features, important habitats, or connecting lands for trails – was the perfect segue to the first speaker: Rebecca Washburn, New England Program Manager for the Land Trust Alliance. Becca's talk focused on national trends and new approaches in land conservation and stressed the need for collaboration in visioning, outreach, programs, and sharing of resources and skill sets between land trusts, especially contiguous ones. The sharing of the retreat and joint map analysis were good examples of cooperation and collaboration.

Kimberly Galandak-O'Connor, Director of Education and Development Coordinator for The Nature Museum at Grafton, then spoke on capacity building and the desirability of regular, personal, targeted contact with members, especially through social media.



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Wanted: Your Email

Please send us your email or 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.

Radford Land Gift (Con't.)

with Grassy Brook Road, where a vehicular pull-off will be provided. The new footpath from the road to the existing trail network will be known as the Radford-Smith Trail. It is a very personal testament to friendship and an enduring love of nature, made vital by a childhood during the lean years of World War II in England, as well as a memorial to Paul Smith, Terry's boyhood friend.



Terry Radford, at left, stands with Andy Toepper near the area for a proposed footbridge across Grassy Brook – part of the Radfords' recent 51-acre land gift to WHPA.



At the WHPA Board Retreat representatives from WHPA and the Putney Mountain Association [PMA] looked over area maps noting existing open spaces and other areas deemed desirable to protect special features and important habitats or to connect or extend present and potential trails. L-r: Bev Major, Rick Cowan, Sarah Waldo, Pat Shields (President of PMA), and Susan Roman.

Wanted: Your Pictures and Stories

What do Pinnacle lands and trails mean to you and your family? We're asking you to share those thoughts, experiences, and the pictures that capture them with us so we can let them inspire others to walk our trails, investigate nature, and participate in our programs. Please send your pictures and stories to rickcowan@me.com.