Dignitaries, legislators, supporters, and volunteers gathered under a handsome tent in a beautiful meadow at Wild Sheep Farm in Athens, VT, on Saturday, September 29, 2012, to celebrate the Pinnacle Association’s 20th Anniversary. The event honored two decades of Pinnacle’s partnerships with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board [VHCB] and the Vermont Land Trust [VLT]. That collaboration created an extensive public-access trail system, more than 20 miles long, that radiates from Westminster to Grafton and preserves more than 1800 acres of beautiful forest and farms in southeastern Vermont.

The day began at 9:00 a.m. with six optional guided walks through various sections of WHPA’s conserved lands. Next came a catered lunch featuring local meats and produce; a welcome by Camilla Roberts, Board Chair; historical tidbits by founder and previous Chair Beverly Major with acknowledgment of several long-time volunteers; poetry by author Diane Lisher-Goodband; and a reading, by State Representative Mike Mrowicki and Senator Jeannette White, of Governor Shumlin’s proclamation recognizing Pinnacle’s land-conservation success, its dedicated volunteers, and effective partnerships.

The celebration concluded with remarks by Dennis Shaffer, Vice President for Conservation and Stewardship at the Vermont Land Trust, and by Gus Seelig, Executive Director of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Gus Seelig summed it up, “The Pinnacle Association is a wonderful example of a community-based non-profit conservation organization. With a large membership, plenty of enthusiastic volunteers, and a clearly defined goal, it’s amazing what this group has accomplished with diligence and perseverance over the past 20 years.”

Twenty Great Years!

INVIATION TO MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association Annual Meeting Program and Refreshments

Sunday April 28, 2013
Westminster West Church

AGENDA
4:00 PM Refreshments. Reports and Minutes on view
4:30 PM Business Meeting: Highlights and Next Projects, Elections, Volunteer of the Year Award
5:00 PM Mike Clough: “Turtles to Toads: Herps of the North” Interactive PowerPoint, live animals, hands-on artifacts

For information, email whpa@svnet.net or visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org
Recent Highlights

**Trials.** The sweeping view from the Pinnacle shelter was expanded by removal of a further ring of trees by Casey Darrow, Steven King, Hayden Lake, and Philip Ranney, with oversight by Trustees Sarah Waldo and Tony Toepfer. We hope to finalize that agreement this spring.

Meanwhile, the new trail license signed by Frazier Cooper-Ellis and Crescent Dragonwagon will allow a new trail to be built from Hemlock Trail, where it currently dead-ends on the ridge, to Bemis Hill Road, where hikers can then walk a short distance to the Bemis Hill Martin Sanctuary trailhead. We will continue to work on closing the ridgeline trail gap to allow hikers to get from central trails to northern ones.

**Boundary marking.** Thanks to Tony Coven, Silos Roberts, and Andy Toepfer, 25 of the 26 miles of Pinnacle property boundaries have been painted, a project that took several years to accomplish!

**Invasive species eradication.** Our three-year project to eliminate buckthorn in the Headwaters Trail beaver pond area. Volunteers involved included Tony Coven, Kath Martin, Camilla Roberts, Silos Roberts, Andy Toepfer, Courtney Venable, Sarah Waldo, Tom Walsh, and Molly Wilson.

**Athens Dome.** A new kiosk was established at a quarry site in the Athens Dome area. Tony Coven will lead this hike to the Pinnacle lookout. We’ll hike from the Board of Trustees on July 1 include Maria Basescu, Bryant Kuhn, Abigail Littlefield, Philip Ranney, Camilla Roberts, and Ellen Zimmerman. Maria Basescu transformed our publicity, newsletters, and press releases into a sophisticated communications tool. Bryant Kuhn has been a wonderful asset in trails management, especially in upgrading the water bars. Abigail Littlefield was instrumental in the creation of the new logo; managed the monitoring projects (deer yards and vernal pools); maintained, stored, and transported the inventory of sale items; and created and maintained the website. Philip Ranney has deep family ties to the Pinnacle land and continues to help maintain and expand the view there and on the trails. Camilla Roberts has been the Chairperson for a dynamic transition period of six years, and will continue to work with the Athens Dome group. An original founder, Ellen Zimmerman was instrumental in creating the Dunn Nature Trail at the Martin Sanctuary and continues to work with the Bald Hill Conservation Committee.

The Board extends its respect and gratitude to everyone of these wonderful people for their energy and dedication, and looks forward to welcoming a new set of Trustees at the Annual Meeting on April 28.

**Values Statement.** To develop a Values Statement to guide us in fulfilling Pinnacle’s mission, the Board undertook a process recommended by Judy Anderson when we discussed some divisive challenges we were facing. After examining models of Values Statements from other conservation organizations, Board members conducted a survey. At the annual Board Retreat in January, we searched for and refined the wording and concepts that best stated our most important values and beliefs regarding the work of the Pinnacle Association. A final Values Statement will be available at the Annual Meeting on April 28. From the process we also discerned some areas that will require further research and thoughtful consideration, especially in seeking approaches to balance the needs of the people who enjoy the land with the needs of the plants and animals for whom it is home.

**Board of Trustees.** Board members who will be retiring from the Board of Trustees on July 1 include Maria Basescu, Bryant Kuhn, Abigail Littlefield, Philip Ranney, Camilla Roberts, and Ellen Zimmerman. Maria Basescu transformed our publicity, newsletters, and press releases into a sophisticated communications tool. Bryant Kuhn has been a wonderful asset in trails management, especially in upgrading the water bars. Abigail Littlefield was instrumental in the creation of the new logo; managed the monitoring projects (deer yards and vernal pools); maintained, stored, and transported the inventory of sale items; and created and maintained the website. Philip Ranney has deep family ties to the Pinnacle land and continues to help maintain and expand the view there and on the trails. Camilla Roberts has been the Chairperson for a dynamic transition period of six years, and will continue to work with the Athens Dome group. An original founder, Ellen Zimmerman was instrumental in creating the Dunn Nature Trail at the Martin Sanctuary and continues to work with the Bald Hill Conservation Committee.

The Board extends its respect and gratitude to everyone of these wonderful people for their energy and dedication, and looks forward to welcoming a new set of Trustees at the Annual Meeting on April 28.

Schedule of Events: Weekend Strolls, Workdays, and More

**April 21, Sunday, 1 PM. Workday at Ledgebrook Road Kiosk.** Meet at the kiosk to construct steps up the steep bank of the trail. Bring rake, shovel, clippers, gloves, and bug repellent. Rain date is Saturday May 18. For information and registration, contact Andy Toepfer at 802-869-3379 or atoepfer@sover.net.

**April 27, Saturday, 2-4:30 PM. Wildflower Walk with Libby Mills and Carol Westing.** A favorite off-trail stroll to discover forest ephemeral spring flowers. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool to the site. Bring camera and water. Contact Libby Mills at 802-387-5996 or libbym@680@comcast.net for information and registration.

**April 28, Sunday, 4 PM. Annual Meeting and Program: Herps of the North with Naturalist/Educator Mike Clough.** See page 1 and visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org for more details.

**May 4, Saturday, 7-10 AM. Early Morning Birding Walk to the Pinnacle.** Richard Foye, birder extraordinaire, will help fine-tune your birding-by-ear skills. Meet at Holden Trail kiosk. Contact Sarah Waldo at 802-387-6036 or sarah_waldo@hotmail.com for information and registration.

**June 1, Saturday, 10 AM-2 PM. Take a Kid for a Hike Day.** Tony Coven will lead this hike to the Pinnacle lookout. We’ll provide a mid-hike snack and special sticker for all participants. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool to the Holden Trail kiosk. Wear sturdy sneakers or walking shoes, and long pants to ward off ticks. Bring water, bag lunch, insect repellent, sunscreen.

**July 6, Saturday, 11 AM-3 PM. Over the Top!** Sarah Waldo and Kath Martin will lead hikers up Holden Trail to the Pinnacle for a bag lunch, then south on Ridgeline Trail and down sometimes steep Cascade Trail to Hedgehog Gulf in Brookline. Hikers will be ferried back to the start at Holden Trail kiosk. Bring water, lunch, insect repellent, sunscreen. For information and registration, contact Sarah Waldo at 802-387-5737 or svwaldo@hotmail.com.

**September 8, Sunday, 1-3:30 PM. Plein-Air Painting.** Capture nature on canvas along beautiful Ledge Road Brook. Meet at the Ledge Road trailhead parking area with your art equipment and a snack and drink. We will provide a rugged vehicle to transport supplies to your chosen site along the brook. At 3 PM we will collect supplies and return to the trailhead to view works created. See Fall 2013 Newsletter for details on a winter exhibit we are in the process of planning. Contact Camilla Roberts for information and registration at 802-869-1388 or camil@vermontel.net.

**September 21, Saturday, 11 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. Leaders will be Tony Coven and Bev Major. The popularity of this program and the 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 or jacket for chilly weather at the top. Meet at Westminster West Church to carpool. Contact Bev Major at 802-387-5737 or bev@dishmail.net for information and registration.

**October 19, Saturday, 1-3:30 PM. Bald Hill Hike.** Randy Major will lead this moderate hike to the Bald Hill summit area. Twin Falls, and historic earthworks of disputed or unknown origin. Meet at the trailhead at 232 Covered Bridge Road in Westminster. For information and registration, contact Randy Major at 802-387-5737 or rmajor@dishmail.net.

**November 2, Saturday, Noon-3 PM. Soapstone Hike.** Led by Bill Brown of the Granite Improvement Society and Andy Toepfer of the Pinnacle Association, this somewhat long moderate walk will feature the soapstone history of the area, a look at one quarry and related cellar holes of a boarding house and mill where soapstone blocks were sawn with wire cable. Dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes, and bring water. Meet at the parking lot opposite The Nature Museum at Grafton to carpool to the start. For more information, contact Andy Toepfer at 802-869-3379 or atoepfer@sover.net.