

Middlebury Area
Land Trust



Quarterly
Newsletter



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Thoughts On Presence

By Naomi Cutler, ECO Americorps Member

When the present becomes a challenge to bear, I like to look to the past for a change. I find that it gives me a much needed perspective on the grandeur of humanity. Even in a small town, there have been millions of unique lived experiences I will never comprehend.

I hope you will enjoy these captured moments of Addison County history that helped guide us towards the extraordinary landscape we have here today.



Photo from Collection of Henry Sheldon Museum, Middlebury Vermont

Some 100 years ago, these four stood to have their photo taken at Chipman Hill. Those dark smudges in the background aren't all trees like you might expect, but lines and lines of people. Could they have been sledding? Watching ski races? Out for their evening walk? This photo doesn't give us all of the answers, but it does show us that Chipman Hill was a place to gather. There may be a few more trees there today, and we may be masked up, but we are still on Chipman Hill, building community in the outdoors.

Fast forward sixty years, and we see some friends playing croquet in the newly dedicated Wright Park. Will Jackson donated this land, and he's



Photo from Collection of Henry Sheldon Museum, Middlebury Vermont

still involved forty years later (**read on to learn more about our most recent conservation project**). As a fan of croquet myself, this photo might inspire me to dust off the old set and bring it down to Wright Park this summer.



NEW THIS MORNING
TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
MORE PEOPLE SPENDING TIME OUTSIDE THIS YEAR

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6:33

Watch the full interview [here](#).

And here we are in the present day. I was recently featured on WCAX for my connection with the ECO Americorps program and my service at MALT. We talked about MALT's continued mission to provide recreational opportunities for our community as the desire for these spaces continues to grow. **As we talked, a bald eagle came into the frame and circled the sycamore tree at Belden Falls.** It was serendipity at its finest, and it reminded me just why this work was so valuable in the past, and why it is so valuable now.

MALT Conserves in Lincoln! By Jamie Brookside



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View of Mt. Abe from the parcel. Photo by Josh Hummel.

On December 21, 2020 **Willard (Will) Jackson** donated a 130-acre parcel of spectacular land to the Town of Lincoln. The project includes a conservation easement held by MALT, protecting its pristine natural landscapes forever. **It's MALT's first conservation easement in Lincoln and represents new relationships and a broader reach of our conservation mission.** The parcel is located off River Rd, just outside Lincoln Village. It boasts miles of trails through forest, field, and along the Garland Brook. It's just a short walk from the Lincoln Village and the Lincoln Community School (LCS). For generations to come, students from LCS will access the land for outdoor learning and exploration. The land will be accessible in perpetuity for walking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, and all other non-motorized recreational activities.

We are deeply inspired by Will's gift to the Town of Lincoln and appreciate MALT's staff and board for bringing this vision to life. **MALT is planning a celebration and ribbon cutting for late Summer 2021, please stay tuned for details.** MALT is raising a one-time amount of \$15,000 for MALT's Stewardship Endowment Fund. These funds will help MALT monitor the property and ensure its preservation for wildlife, scenic viewsheds, and public access, forever. **Please consider supporting this incredible resource for all of Addison County by donating today.** Your gift will honor this once-in-a-lifetime donation for our greater community. Thank you to Will Jackson, for your love of nature and dedication to making it accessible to all.

Welcome to MALT's newest VHCB Member



MALT is ecstatic to welcome our newest VHCB Americorps member: Celeste! Celeste will be serving with us from February to August as the Environmental Education and Stewardship Specialist! She will join Jamie, Caleb, and Naomi to teach our spring and summer education programs, and she will assist with trail maintenance on the TAM and NCT.

Celeste's academic background is largely in Biological and Environmental Sciences. She graduated from Smith College in 2017 with a B.A. and from The University of Rhode Island in 2019 with a M.S. In between these degrees, she had a blast as an Aquarium intern at Maria Mitchell Aquarium and an outdoor residential educator at The Ecology School. Still trying to figure out where she fits best in the environmental sphere, Celeste is excited to return to working outside with kids and the public and learn more about small non-profit management. Outside of work, Celeste loves hiking, knitting, reading, practicing yoga, cooking/baking delicious vegan food, and contra dancing (in days of pre-pandemic yore).

What's Coming with Volunteers? By Caleb Basa

Volunteers are the unspoken heart and soul of MALT's mission. The cohort of people who have worked on the TAM and on MALT's conserved land is truly significant. It is through the dedicated community of MALT that all of Addison county has a remarkable opportunity to find connection with nature through the TAM. Be it cutting buckthorn at the Hurd Grassland, walking Chipman hill with your dog Dacks, or weed whipping the side trails, our volunteers are necessary and vital to operations at MALT. This coming spring, MALT staff and interns have plans to create a new system of volunteer mobilization that will bring us out of the dark age. Specifically focused on invasive species, trail stewardship, and volunteer independence, we hope to drastically increase our efforts to improve trail character and natural community composition through targeting buckthorn and honeysuckle. MALT is very excited about this project and hope you are too! **If interested and want to volunteer for the project, please email info@maltvt.org**



Astrid and Dana Olsen push bark chips in Wright Park

We Want Your Photos!



Wright Park. Photo by Andrew L'Roe, MALT Member

In partnership with the Otter Creek Audubon Society, we are accepting photo submissions to our 2022 Phenology Calendar. This calendar will focus on seasonal change in our natural landscape, on and around MALT lands and trails. Phenology is the study of cyclical events in nature, such as flowering, hibernation, and migration. We have placed photo posts at six locations on MALT lands and trails. **Submit your photos of the TAM and the Middlebury Area! We want to see what you've found during your explorations of nature.**

Submit your photos [here](#). Part of MALT's mission is to conserve natural landscapes in our community, and to enhance educational opportunities about these natural landscapes. We hope that this project will allow our community to connect with the natural landscape more deeply, as we watch the natural world change with the seasons. Once our calendar is created and sold, any profits will be donated directly to our lands and trails. Please reach out to info@maltvt.org with questions, or for more information.

Stewardship Adventures

Caleb and Naomi have been spending the winter trekking around our conserved lands. Have you ever wanted to visit our conserved lands? **Learn more about how you can visit [here](#)!** Here are some photos from the field.



Caleb crosses a pond the safe way on the Swallow Barn Easement.



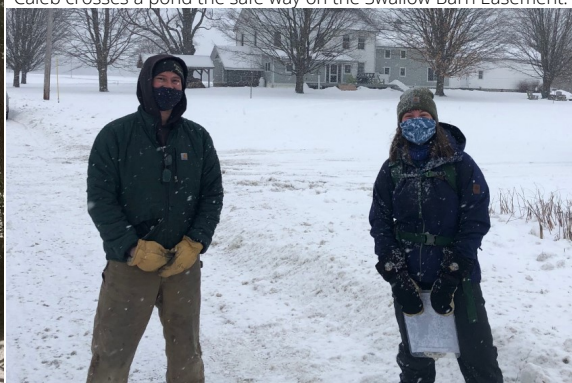
Naomi and Bill Roper check out the old barn on the Roper-Ganley Easement.



A 200 year old stand of Hemlock Trees at the Foote Farm



We found a deer leg caught in a tree on the Swallow Barn easement.



Naomi and Chase Goodrich at the Seeley Farm Easement.

To the future!

As I reflect on the past and move through the present, it can be both intimidating and enthralling to plan for the future. This year, I get the opportunity to participate in MALT's strategic planning process, where we build the framework for our next three years and beyond. Thank you to our [board](#) and to our [members](#) who are dedicated to MALT in ways big and small. Thank you to all who participated in our community survey and are helping to shape our vision. I'm excited to be here to witness how MALT grows with and for our community. See you on the trails! Warmly,

Naomi Cutler
ECO Americorps Member
Lands, Trails, and Education Coordinator



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