

# Winter Newsletter 2023

A new publication on the work our members support

Read inside for...

- More about our AmeriCorps Members and their service
- Public access and trails development at Salisbury Mills
- The TAM hiking award!



Photo credit: Caleb Kenna

Middlebury Area Land Trust

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Connecting People With the Lands We Protect



Messages from...

## Middlebury Area Land Trust

Working with our community to conserve natural and productive landscapes, and to enhance scenic, recreational, and educational opportunities.

### More AmeriCorps members help MALT achieve our mission

By Simon Schreier

MALT has been fortunate to host three AmeriCorps service members this year. With their help, we're getting more done than ever before.

Jackson Moody is a full-time AmeriCorps member, joining MALT through the [Vermont Housing and Conservation Board](#). Since he started his 11-month term in September, he's been an invaluable addition to the team. MALT campers have gotten to know Jackson as an educator in our after-school programs. When he's not with students, Jackson is outside caring for the 19-mile [Trail Around Middlebury \(TAM\)](#), or coordinating volunteers to help keep signage up-to-date.

To that end, Jackson has been joined by MALT's two part-time AmeriCorps Members, Audrey Welsh and Chad Kim. These positions are through the [Environmental Careers and Opportunities \(ECO\) AmeriCorps](#) program. Their positions are a first for MALT; they're students at Middlebury College, serving with MALT in a part-time capacity during the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. During their January term, Audrey and Chad served at MALT full-time, and it made a world of difference.

Together they tackled a massive project – cleaning and organizing MALT's conservation files. MALT cares for nearly [4,000 acres of land](#) in Addison County, so streamlining the paperwork for all that is no small feat. Their work will enable MALT to more efficiently and effectively steward our conserved lands, and sets the stage for the arrival of MALT's new Lands & Grants Manager.

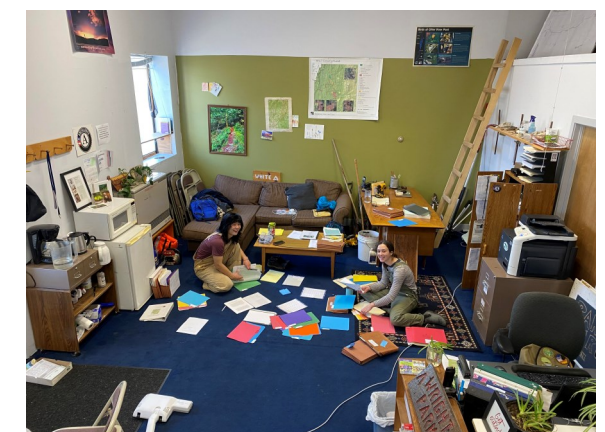
While Audrey and Chad have worked amazingly as a team,

they've also been busy pursuing independent projects. Chad has brought his chainsaw skills to bear, helping clean up our trails after the incredible windstorm just before New Year's. He's also collaborating with Jackson to build-out MALT's volunteer trail program; keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities in the Spring.

Audrey has pioneered our [TAM Hiking Award](#) – anyone who hikes the whole TAM, whether in pieces or in one fell swoop, can earn a patch commemorating the experience. And, she has been working with Merle Schloff and Kip Andres to develop interpretive signage for Salisbury Mills, an incredible historic site. In the coming months we hope to improve access to this conserved property, with new trails and an expanded parking area.

Hosting three AmeriCorps service members has been a massive boon to MALT, on the order of 2,600 hours! Jackson, Audrey, and Chad have brought so much energy, enthusiasm, and joy. There's a fantastic, frenetic energy in the office when we're all here. I hope that by being a part of this community they will learn and grow, and I eagerly look forward to seeing what they do when their service at MALT has ended.

If you're interested in supporting AmeriCorps members at MALT, consider joining the [Backpacks, Boots, and Binoculars charitable giving program](#). Participants pledge three years of gifts to provide sustainability and consistency, allowing MALT to host AmeriCorps servicemembers year after year. You can contact our Executive Director at [jamie@maltvt.org](mailto:jamie@maltvt.org) for more info.





# Sneak Peak! Access to the History of Salisbury Mills

by Kip Andres and Jamie Jo Brookside Horton

By now, you may have heard about MALT's upcoming work at Salisbury Mills. We featured our preparations in the 2022 Annual Impact Report. The MALT property, which lies between Salisbury village and Lake Dunmore, has a fascinating history, containing remains of mills, dams, sluiceways, and abandoned roads reflecting early industrial use of the area. In addition to its historical richness, the property's forested state and ecological diversity make it an ideal location for year-round outdoor recreation.

Having completed state and local zoning requirements and raising nearly all the funds, plans are finalized for the park. This spring, MALT staff, AmeriCorps, and volunteers (sign up! info below...) will develop trails and wayfinding signage to facilitate hiking, snow shoeing, and cross-country skiing. All this will dovetail with our primary goal of enhancing access to the historic mill sites scattered throughout the property.



Depiction of a watermill from the turn of the 18th century. By Dick Stanton.

Currently, MALT is recruiting volunteers to help with a number of trail and infrastructure projects. If you'd like to volunteer your construction skills or general labor this Summer (June 26th-July 1st and August 7th-12th) please email Jackson Moody at [jackson@maltvt.org](mailto:jackson@maltvt.org). Also, we are still accepting contributions to the project. You may contact our Executive Director, Jamie Jo Brookside Horton, at [jamie@maltvt.org](mailto:jamie@maltvt.org) to donate. With generous grants and donations, we've raised nearly \$30K and need an additional \$5K to care for the property's ongoing needs.



Workers constructing wood stave pipeline similar to those whose remains we see at Salisbury Mills, circa 1890, source: Flickr.

Infrastructure elements will include a modest parking lot, two stream crossings, and several foot bridges. Interpretative materials - to be presented on signs and kiosks - are currently being developed, and will be focused in proximity to the park's most noteworthy historic features. These materials will combine text with historic photographs, and will provide insight into the significance of the individual mills and the technologies they reflect.

**Volunteer for building new trail, painting kiosk displays, installing wayfinding signage, building river crossings, and more.**

# 100 Monthly Members in 2023!

Help us get there! Go to [maltvt.org/monthly-giving](https://maltvt.org/monthly-giving)

In 2019, MALT launched monthly giving. Fast forward to 2023, and **MALT has 58 monthly donors!** With MALT's growing impact, **WE HAVE OUR EYES SET ON 100 MONTHLY MEMBERS BY THE END OF 2023.** We thrive on the predictable income that our monthly members provide, which is currently over \$10,000 a year!

**Please join your neighbors and friends!**



I chose to become a MALT monthly donor because the TAM is so special - it is a respite, it is a playground, it is a place to connect. I am supporting the longevity of this invaluable community resource. **-Erica Castle**



I'm a monthly donor (and volunteer) with MALT because I believe in their mission and I L-O-V-E the TAM. A monthly membership provides a predictable income stream for MALT and reduces their need for one-time or annual donations. I use the TAM year round, why wouldn't I contribute year round? **- Jason Chance**



I donate monthly to MALT because I value this fantastic resource our community has at our doorstep. Living "in town" while being able to access nature so easily is a gift. I value the work MALT does to maintain the TAM as well as the education camps for the young people in our community. Teaching children to love and care for nature is vitally important to our future.

**-Renee Ursitti**



I loved MALT first for the Trail Around Middlebury, our 19 miles of walking trail encircling the town. Then I also loved it for the kids' outdoor adventure camps during school vacations and summer. And finally, I learned about the land MALT helps to conserve, such as Willard's Woods in Lincoln. I'm happy to support their work with an ongoing monthly donation.

**-Abi Sessions**

In 2020 my spouse and I were living in Iowa. I was fortunate to transition to a fully remote job working for an international non-profit. We wanted to head back east because we missed the mountains and hiking. After a few months, my spouse landed a job at Middlebury College and we moved to Vermont! We had heard from my spouse's coworkers at the college that there was an 19-mile trail around the town and we were SO excited to check it out. After 5 years in the Midwest with no mountains, a trail around our new hometown sounded amazing. On one of our very first outings we came across one of the kiosks and there was a sign about MALT. Being new to the community and already enjoying the TAM, I decided right there that I would become a MALT volunteer as well as a monthly donor. My spouse and I are both so thankful to have a resource like MALT and an incredible trail system just steps from our door. I'm happy to do what I can to keep it going.

**-Courtney Vengrin**



# 2023 Public Program Schedule

Sponsored by [Press Forward PR!](#)

You're invited to join MALT for campfires, fireflies, stars, and so much more. Check out our line-up of public programming. More events are being added all the time; visit [MALTVT.ORG/EVENTS](https://maltvt.org/events), follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay in-the-loop, or subscribe to MALT's E-news at [maltvt.org](https://maltvt.org).

## June 10 – [Bird Banding with Mark LaBarr \(FREE\)](#)

MALT welcomes folks for a morning of bird banding with Audubon Vermont Biologist Mark LaBarr. You'll get the chance to get hands-on with birds while contributing to a better understanding of their life cycles and migration patterns.

## June 17 – [Intro to Birding with Otter Creek Audubon Society \(FREE\)](#)

Join Otter Creek Audubon Society for this intro to birding. Take a roughly one-and-a-half hour walk through Wright Park. We'll break into small groups and work our way down to Otter Creek, discovering the myriad feathered creatures along the way.

## June 24 – [Firefly Night \(FREE\)](#)

Come out for a gorgeous evening with friends and family in Otter Creek Gorge. Dr. Gregory Pask of Middlebury College will be there, helping us identify fireflies by counting their flashes, and sharing his knowledge about these creatures that light up the night (and some that don't light up at all!).

## July 8 – [Nocturnal Bugs and Insects \(FREE\)](#)

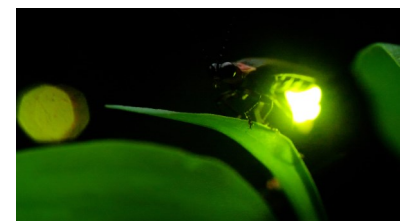
MALT and Dr. Gregory Pask of Middlebury College look for the crawling creatures of the night. We'll set up a black light and white sheet to lure in the insect residents of Otter Creek Gorge that fill the forest with life all night long.

## September 30 – [Mushroom Walk with Meg Madden \(\\$\)](#)

Madden will help you delve into the fascinating world of fungi and learn how to identify wild mushrooms. As a myco-educator Meg loves to share her knowledge of the natural world, particularly when it comes to all things fungi.

## October 14 – [Astronomy Night with the Vermont Astronomical Society \(FREE\)](#)

It's hard to match that feeling of wonder you get as you peer through a telescope and see a pinprick of light resolve itself into a planet or star. Share that feeling of discovery with your friends and family. Come by Otter Creek Gorge, where the incredible astronomers of VTAS will be setting up an array of equipment for observing the universe.



## Education Manager — The First Year

Adding an Education Manager to the MALT team has been a game changer. Here are a few highlights, as we look back at Simon's first year with MALT.

- A dedicated education position has allowed the Executive Director to focus on big-picture projects such as Salisbury Mills, while still maintaining a highly successful education program.
- In FY21, MALT earned \$51,627 from public programs for youth and adults. In FY22, with the addition of Simon's leadership and programmatic expertise, MALT earned \$67,110.
- Simon has also been an impactful member of MALT's development team. He works on membership giving of <\$250. This is most often our program participant constituents, making it a great fit for donor relationship development. We aim to increase our membership giving by 10-15% over the first two years of his position.

### 2022 By The Numbers

Year	People Engaged	Staff Hours
2019	306	4,560
2020	166*	6,640
2021	236*	7,440
2022	489	10,720

*\*Dropped with pandemic restrictions*

## MALT rolls out the TAM Hiking Award

MALT is excited to announce the launch of the **TAM Hiking Award**. Anyone who hikes the entirety of the 19-mile Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) – whether in sections or in one go – can apply for the award. In recognition of their achievement, award recipients will receive a one-year individual MALT membership and a TAM Hiking Award patch.

Get out there and hike/snowshoe/ski/bike the TAM! Once you've covered all 19 miles, submit your application (both paper and online formats are available), and as soon as the patch design is finalized and fabricated, you'll be among the first people to receive this stylish and exclusive badge of honor!



Thank you to our ECOAmeriCorps service member, **Audrey Welsh**, for creating this **NEW** program! Participate by visiting: [www.maltvt.org/tam/#award](http://www.maltvt.org/tam/#award)

## Volunteers show up for the TAM

By Jackson Moody

Right before Christmas of 2022 our small town in Vermont got hit with a powerful windstorm. With gusts up to 70 miles per hour many trees came down, and thousands were without power for days. The TAM was not spared from the damage. With most of MALT staff away for the holidays, it seemed that it would take months to clear all the debris that had fallen on the trail.

However, it didn't take nearly that long for the damage to disappear. Emails with trail condition reports and pictures of downed trees started to pour into our inboxes. There was no shortage of volunteers wanting to help out, and 75% of the cleanup was taken care of before I was even back from visiting family for the holidays. It was amazing to see our community show up, and help take care of the TAM when it needed it most.

The affirmation that volunteers are out there, eager to get their hands dirty, comes at an opportune time. Before I lived in Vermont, I was a member of several trail organiza-

tions in North Carolina. Western North Carolina has turned into a destination for hiking and mountain biking. People from all over the Southeast come to experience those trails, and you would be surprised how much of the maintenance is taken on by volunteers.

MALT is ready to engage more volunteers in maintenance of the TAM.

Historically, much of the work has been performed by MALT staff, interns, or a small group of dedicated volunteers. With increased usage of the TAM over the past years, and the addition of the Salisbury Mills trails, we're going to need some extra hands.

To meet this need we are currently hiring a Trails & Volunteer Coordinator. This new position will be able to focus on volunteer recruitment and relationships. In addition to this, I am coordinating with fellow AmeriCorps member Chad to organizing several volunteer get-togethers this spring. **If you are a TAM user and looking for a way to support the trail, then this is for you.** No experience necessary! Having the opportunity to get your hands dirty, build community, and forge a greater connection with the lands you recreate on is very special.

**Dates are still being worked out for these gatherings, but please email me at [Jackson@maltvt.org](mailto:Jackson@maltvt.org) to stay in the loop!**

