

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015



*People loved the 2015 Grand Hike*

## CHAMPLAIN AREA TRAILS

SAVING LAND



MAKING TRAILS





PO Box 193 • 6482 Main Street • Westport, NY 12993  
518 962 2287  
www.champlainareatrails.com

Dear Friends of Champlain Area Trails,

Last September, to celebrate my wife Michelle's 50th birthday, we "Walked the Way" in France. As we hiked 207 miles, walking from village to village on trails, farm lanes, and roads, going up and down endless hills through forests, farms and small towns, I thought about how far Champlain Area Trails (CATS) has come along its path to "link communities, connect people with nature, and promote economic vitality."

CATS began its journey seven years ago when a handful of people acted on a dream of people hiking from hamlet-to-hamlet through the Champlain Valley's spectacular landscape. Since then, we've gone down the path we set for ourselves and created over 42 miles of new hiking trails and publicized many others. Along the way, we have protected over 495 acres of land, initiated an outdoor education program, and now have close to one-thousand people who have joined us on this adventure.

As you travel through the pages that follow, you may remember the hikes, events, and exciting news we shared during 2015 and with great anticipation, we look forward to continuing the journey with you. In 2016, we will complete our third conservation easement, protecting another 120 acres of land in the Champlain Valley. We will hold three more hamlet-to-hamlet hikes and proceed with plans to add twelve miles of new trails. Right now, we are laying the groundwork to expand our trail system south to Ticonderoga, and north and west to Keeseville, Lewis, and Elizabethtown, and eventually connect to the High Peaks. And, we already have a full schedule of events and interpretive hikes taking place this year.

Every step we take is because of YOU. Your donations, suggestions, time, and support have made our journey a success that many people enjoy. Even more, it brings a new sense of optimism for a future when people come here throughout the year to "Hike the Lake" on hamlet-to-hamlet trails around Lake Champlain!

YOU keep the momentum going. When you invest in Champlain Area Trails, you invest in the Champlain Valley. YOUR support helps us climb steep hills and reach our goals. There are several ways you can give. Contribute a springtime gift to CATS. Increase your annual donation. Make a transformative, major gift. Sign up for the monthly giving program. Give to the Long Pond Project (see page 7). Donate stocks or name CATS in your will. Whatever you decide, we thank you for your support and for helping us move further along the trail.

Thank you and happy trails,

Chris Maron  
Executive Director

*CATS' goal is to have thousands of people come throughout the year to "Hike the Lake" on hamlet-to-hamlet trails around Lake Champlain.*



*Board of Directors: Bill Bardeen, Malinda Chapman, John Davis, Vincent Dupont, Danielle Garneau, Evan George, Catherine Ross Haskins, Anne Lincoln, Nancy Lindquist, David McNamara, Rob Powell, Sharp Swan, Delia Thompson*

## CATS AWARDED ACCREDITATION



Champlain Area Trails achieved a MAJOR accomplishment in 2015. After a three-year process that required us to submit extensive documentation and undergo an intense review of our standards and practices by the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission, we were awarded ACCREDITATION. HOORAY!

*“Accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance provides greater confidence to landowners who work with us to permanently conserve their land and allow trails on their properties. It also assures the public and our donors that their support is well-placed,” said CATS board chair, Katharine Preston. “Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program.”*



**CATS is one of just 317 land trusts** across the country that has been awarded accreditation. As an accredited land trust, we are authorized to display this seal, indicating that we meet **national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.**



*Executive Director Chris Maron accepts the accreditation certificate from Land Trust Alliance President Rand Wentworth at the 2015 Land Trust Alliance Rally in Sacramento, California.*



## MAKING TRAILS



### Art Farm Trail

*Artist Ted Cornell invited CATS to put a trail on his property that would wind through a field, go past his unique sculptures, showcase great views, and pass through woods before meeting our Field and Forest Trail. From there hikers can turn around, hike to Wadhams, to the Bobcat Trail, or return via the Long Valley Trail. Before the inaugural hike on September 27, we enjoyed hearing Ted discuss his artwork.*



### Long Valley Trail

*We opened the Long Valley Trail in September to provide hikers with a walk through open fields and offer an alternative route when a nearby trail closes during hunting season. The 1.2 mile trail connects the Field and Forest Trail to the Art Farm Trail through a grassy valley with views of the nearby mountains.*



### DaCy Meadow Farm Trail

*On October 17, we celebrated the official opening of the DaCy Meadow Farm Trail with a hike, followed by a lunch hosted by landowners Cynthia and David Johnston. The 2-mile loop trail traverses fields and forests, offers scenic views, crosses Hoisington Brook, and goes past the animals on this working farm.*

*“We love the work CATS is doing and wanted to host this hike and lunch to show our support,” said David Johnston of DaCy Meadow Farm.*

## SUMMER INTERNS



**CATS provides learning opportunities to inspire the next generation of land stewards.** For the second year in a row CATS had a “summer intern” program when Connecticut College seniors **Theo Bakewell** and **James Gilmore** built new trails, maintained others, and learned about land conservation and the workings of a nonprofit organization. **And, they had some great ideas!**

One day, James came into the CATS office and said, “*Wouldn’t it be cool if people could go to your website and see what it’s like to hike some of the trails? Theo and I could use our “Go-Pro” camera and show people how great the trails really are.*”

And that’s what they did. Thanks to Theo and James, we now have two virtual hikes on our website so people can “**hike the trail**” before actually hiking the trail.

James and Theo worked hard representing CATS at public events, mowing grass and removing branches from existing trails, building bridges on the **Black Kettle** and **Hidden Quarry Trails**, and making new trails. **Thank you James and Theo!**



*James at the top of the Wildway Overlook Trail.*



*Theo installing trail markers on the Hidden Quarry Trail.*



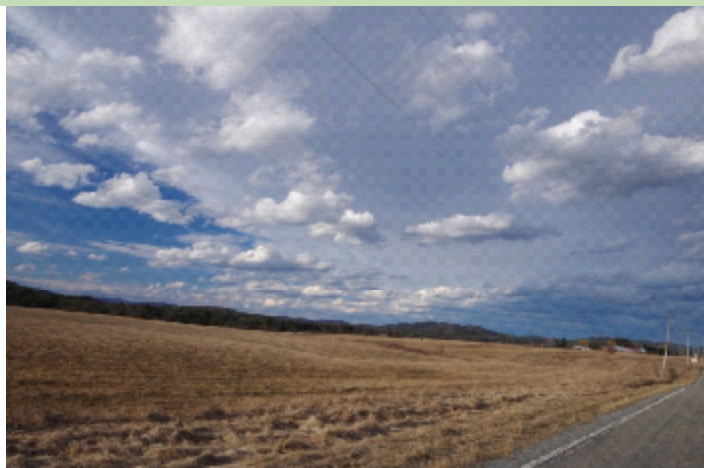
## SAVING LAND

### Three Land Trusts Cooperate to Save Clark-Healy Farm

CATS coined the term “Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership” to encourage cooperation on land conservation projects. That is just what happened when we joined with Open Space Institute and Eddy Foundation to conserve the Clark-Healy Farm on Walker Road in Essex. Here’s how it worked: Donna Healy decided to sell her family’s farm but wished to see it “saved” as a working farm. Dillon Klepetar, who with Kelly McQuade had recently moved to Essex, wanted to buy a farm. CATS, The Open Space Institute (OSI), and Eddy Foundation work to conserve farmland, support local-food-based farms, encourage young farmers, and promote economic vitality. So, Eddy loaned funds to Klepetar to buy the farm, OSI purchased a conservation easement from Klepetar to repay part of the loan, CATS helped bring the arrangement together, and we can all take pride in saving a scenic 158-acre farm. Special thanks to the *Klipper Family Fund for the Champlain Valley* that supported this and many other recent conservation projects.



*Thanks to Open Space Institute, Eddy Foundation, CATS, and the Klipper Family Fund for the Champlain Valley, Dillon Klepetar (pictured with Kelly McQuade) owns and operates a 158-acre farm protected with a conservation easement.*



*Cooperation is key to conservation success! OSI, with assistance from CATS and generous support from the Klipper Family Fund for the Champlain Valley, conserved the Severance Farm in Westport. It adjoins 1500 acres of farmland conserved by the Adirondack Land Trust. The result of the combined efforts is strong protection for Westport’s productive farms and scenic vistas.*

## SAVING LAND



### Long Pond Conservancy's Western Shoreline Protection Project

CATS' Long Pond Conservancy Program initiated The Legacy Campaign to save Long Pond's Western Shore. Long Pond, about 3 miles north of Willsboro, features Pok-O-MacCready Camps, the 1812 Homestead Living History Museum, beautiful homes on its eastern shore, and a pristine western shoreline you see from Route 22. To prevent development on the western shore, the Long Pond Conservancy has raised almost half towards its \$350,000 goal to purchase a 48-acre parcel and provide public access on a hiking trail to the lake. Your generosity can help save Long Pond.



*The Long Pond Legacy Program is raising the funds to purchase the property by December 31, 2016.*



*The 48-acre parcel is set amidst 212 acres of conserved lakefront property. Purchasing it will secure the pristine nature of the western shoreline and protect the lake's clean water.*

### CATS set to conserve 120 acres in the Split Rock Wildway

The *Split Rock Wildway* wildlife corridor connects Split Rock Wild Forest on Lake Champlain to the Adirondack Mountains. One branch of the *Wildway* goes through forests between Wadhams and Whallonsburg and the other goes southwest toward the "Westport Woods," a 20,000-acre forest in the Adirondack's eastern foothills. That part of the *Wildway* is where Tom Duca recently purchased 120-acre Westport property is located. It's also a prominent feature in the southwest view from Coon Mountain. We worked throughout the year with Tom and will soon purchase a conservation easement to protect the habitat connectivity, conserve farmland for local-food based farmers, and create a hiking trail. The project is supported by a grant from Open Space Institute's Klipper Family Fund for the Champlain Valley.



*The Duca Property provides views over the Champlain Valley toward the Adirondack High Peaks.*



*The Duca Property is a prominent feature in the southwest view from Coon Mountain.*



## OUTDOOR EDUCATION & SPECIAL EVENTS

**CATS Outdoor Education Program** is GROWING. We presented 16 fascinating and enjoyable programs for people of all ages covering a broad range of topics.



*Historian Morris Glenn explains the history of the USS Monitor on a walk on the Penfield Pond Trail.*



*Dr. Michael Burgess discusses medicinal and edible plants found in the Champlain Valley.*



*The CATS Hawk Watch at Coot Hill featured fabulous views of the Champlain Valley and numerous sightings of migrating hawks.*

### Celebrate CATS Event

In June, Tony Goodwin, author of the Adirondack Trail Guides and creator of the Jackrabbit Trail, spoke at our annual Celebrate CATS Event on National Trails Day. He entertained us with stories about making trails and explained how trails build stronger communities.



*CATS Executive Director Chris Maron thanks Tony Goodwin and presents him with a framed "Hike the Lake" print.*



## HAMLET-TO-HAMLET HIKING



*Aaron Woolf with daughter Eloise on the Gand Hike.*

**"We see Hamlet-to-Hamlet hiking** as a opportunity for visitors to come to the Champlain Valley, hike from town to town and learn about the people, the community, and the unique features of this part of the Adirondack Park," said CATS board member Catherine Ross Haskins. "In addition to our Grand Hike, we plan to have more Hamlet-to-Hamlet hikes of varying distances to other local communities."

### Join CATS 2016 Hamlet-to-Hamlet Hikes

*May 14 - CATS Grand Hike to the Essex Inn*

*June 4 - Over the Mountain from Mineville to Camp Dudley*

*Sept. 17 - Two Hikes to the "Harvest Fest" at the Essex County Fairgrounds in Westport*



*Local businesses provided food at the oases.*



*250 people and one llama attended the Grand Hike.*



*Hikers walking over the bridge to cross a stream on the Field & Forest Trail.*



*The Grand Hike Block Party at the Essex Inn featured great food, tasty drinks, music, kids' crafts, a photo-booth and restorative yoga and massage.*



## AWARDS AND GRANTS

### **NYS Conservation Partnership Program Professional Development Grant** (\$70,000)

The CATS' Stewardship Coordinator Position is supported with funding from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The NYSCPP is administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

### **Essex Community Fund**

(Administered by the Adirondack Foundation)  
\$1,000 grant in honor of Baird Voorhis to construct an informational kiosk in Essex.

### **International Paper Foundation**

\$2,000 for the printing and distribution of the CATS 2015/2016 Trail Map.  
*(Note: CATS also gratefully acknowledges International Paper's Ticonderoga Mill for donating the paper produced at the mill from trees harvested in Adirondack working forest, responsibly managed in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council.)*

### **Adirondack Garden Club's Ellen Lea Paine Nature Fund**

\$700 for CATS Outdoor Education Program and Internship Program

### **Kelsey Trust Foundation**

\$5,000 for the Wildway Passage Acquisition and Protection Program

### **Essex County, Creating Healthy Places**

\$2,000 for bridge building projects on our trails.

### **Fields Pond Foundation**

\$5,000 for the Cheney Mountain Land Acquisition and Protection Project.



*Grants from Essex County's Creating Healthy Places and the Honeybee Foundation in 2014 helped build a kiosk next to our office in Westport that highlights CATS trails. We'll complete a similar kiosk in Essex thanks to a grant from the Essex Community Fund.*



*This year, Bill Amadon joined the CATS staff as Stewardship Coordinator, thanks to a grant from the NYS Conservation Partnership Program matched by many of our generous donors. A long-time volunteer and former board member of CATS, Bill helped to identify, create, and maintain many of the CATS Trails.*

### **Thank you to the private and public landowners who partner with CATS to have trails on their properties.**

Jeffery G. Allot · Sarah Aunchman · Jenny and Reginald Bedell · Caroline and James Carlisle  
 Jesse Gibson-Conley and Tommy Conley · Rita and James Conway · Edward H. Cornell  
 Susan Bacot-Davis and George Davis · Leanna and Richard DeNeale · The Eddy Foundation · Essex County  
 Rose Chancler and Steve Feinbloom · Matthew Foley · Full and By Farm · Francisca Irwin · Peter Jerdo  
 Cynthia and David Johnston · Lakeside School at Black Kettle Farm · Lee Trust · Carol and James Meaker  
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 Theresa and James Kapper · Catherine Seidenberg and Tom Duca · Cordelia Sand · Three Creek Farms, LLC  
 Mary and Frank Walls · Adirondack Land Trust · The Nature Conservancy · Northeast Wilderness Trust  
 Penfield Museum · State of New York · Towns of Westport, Willsboro, Elizabethtown, Lewis, Moriah, Chesterfield

## VOLUNTEERS



**Volunteers are critical for our success.** We thank everyone who came out for volunteer trail days, who “adopted” a trail to maintain regularly, and for all of you who have taken the time to move a fallen branch off the trail, clear away a snow-bent branch in the winter, or simply let us know about trail conditions!



*In October, we hosted fifteen American Hiking Society members from around the country who spent a “volunteer vacation” week building the new “Sophie’s Lair Trail” in Willsboro.*



### CATS honors Bruce Klink with bench at Wildway Overlook Trail

In August, friends and family gathered at the Wildway Overlook Trail in Essex to remember Bruce Klink, a friend, board member, and founder of CATS. We placed a bench at the summit to honor Bruce and thank him for his vision, creativity, and commitment. When you sit on the bench and look out over the Champlain Valley, thank Bruce and the dedicated visionaries who created CATS and everyone who supports and makes the trails we all enjoy.



*Family and friends came together to remember Bruce Klink.*



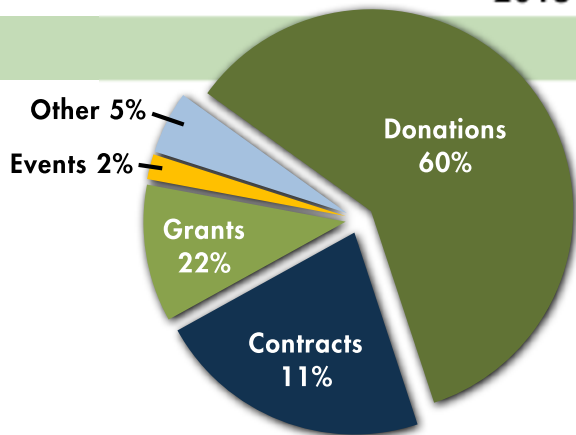
*Remembering Bruce and enjoying the view at Wildway Overlook.*



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT BOARD & STAFF

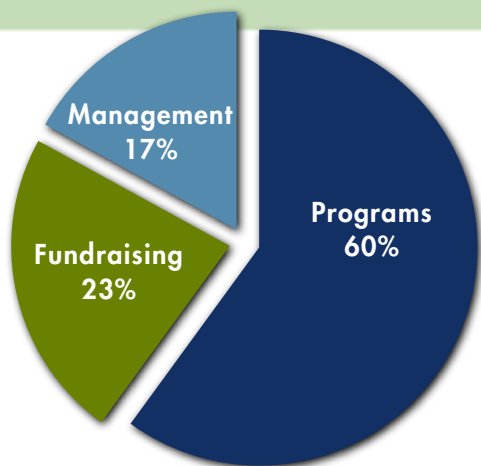
## 2015 INCOME STATEMENT

### REVENUE



<i>Operating Revenue</i>	
Donations .....	\$136,875
Grants .....	\$50,688
Contracts .....	\$26,562
Events .....	\$5,815
Other .....	\$12,930
<b>Total Operating Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$232,870</b>
Total Land Conservation Revenue .....	\$4,140
<b>Total Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$237,010</b>

### EXPENSES



<i>Operating Expenses</i>	
Programs .....	\$141,480
Fundraising .....	\$55,198
Management .....	\$39,410
<b>Total Operating Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$236,088</b>
Land Purchase Pay-off .....	\$5,000
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$241,088</b>
Transfer to Long Pond Fund .....	\$13,950
Transfer to Stewardship Endowment .....	\$3,900
Transfer to Land/Protection Fund .....	\$5,240
Net Surplus/Deficient .....	-\$27,168
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$237,010</b>

### 2015 BALANCE SHEET

<b>Assets</b>	
Checking/Savings .....	\$158,189
Fixed Assets .....	\$127,660
Other Assets .....	\$800
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>\$286,649</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	
Current Liabilities .....	\$4,149
Long-term Liabilities .....	\$15,811
Stewardship Fund .....	\$17,050
Land Management Fund .....	\$12,500
Land Acquisition/Protection Fund .....	\$6,240
Long Pond Fund .....	\$73,008
Support Received in Advance .....	\$22,500
Equity .....	\$135,391
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity .....</b>	<b>\$286,649</b>

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 2015

- Katharine Preston – *Chair*
- Evan George – *Vice Chair*
- Bill Bardeen – *Treasurer*
- Malinda Chapman – *Secretary*
- Bill Amadon · John Fortune · Danielle Garneau
- Catherine Ross Haskins · Anne Lincoln · Nancy Lindquist
- Jamie Phillips · Sharp Swan · Delia Thompson

*Note:* We thank Bill Amadon, Mark Davenport, John Fortune, and Katharine Preston, for their service and are pleased to have John Davis, Vincent Dupont, David McNamara, and Rob Powell fill those positions.

### STAFF

- Chris Maron – *Executive Director*
- Gail Testa – *Operations & Development Manager*
- Bill Amadon – *Stewardship Coordinator*

## A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL THE 2015 DONORS



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We also wish to thank all the generous donors that requested their gifts remain anonymous

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