



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of Champlain Area Trails,

**“Connectivity.”** That’s what I emphasized during a presentation at Clinton Community College when I explained how conserving habitat connections allow wildlife to move through the landscape. Next, I described CATS’ goal of town-to-town trails and that our Grand Hikes connect people with nature and promote economic vitality.

During the question-answer period, one student asked, “Could you say that **connectivity defines all of your work** because you provide passageways for animals and for people?” My answer was, **“That’s exactly true!”**

**CATS trails connect people to the land and bring communities together.** Last year, we held a record number of outdoor education hikes and three town-to-town hikes. And, we built seven miles of new trails while conserving 245 more acres of land.

As a CATS Donor, **you make all this happen!** In fact, **your support does so much more.** Last year’s Adirondack Harvest Festival is a prime example. Champlain Area Trails came together with the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism, Westport representatives, Hub-on-the-Hill, and local farms to host **two big hikes and a farmers’ market** highlighting local farms, food, breweries, and music.

**Success builds on success** and creates new opportunities and **challenges.** Big ones! Like these:

- Governor Cuomo just announced his goal of completing the **Empire State Trail** by 2020 which features a bike route through the Champlain Valley to the Canadian Border.
- The proposed **Adirondack Cuisine Trail** from Ticonderoga to Keeseville is a driving route for people to visit local farms, markets, and restaurants.
- **National Geographic** designated the Champlain Valley’s “Lakes to Locks Passage” as a “geotourism” site to promote tourism and the economic health of communities.
- The **North Country Scenic Trail** is locating a trail route connecting state land to the Champlain Bridge.
- The **Adirondack Community-based Trails and Lodging System** is developing a system of hut-to-hut trails to link towns throughout the Adirondack Park.

**What does this mean for CATS?** We advise these initiatives to connect them to our trails, advance shared goals, and boost the local economy.

**“Everybody benefits!”**

Your investment in Champlain Area Trails created the progress highlighted in this this 2016 Annual Report. **Please donate again and continue on the joyful journey of connecting people and communities.**

Thank you and Happy trails,

Chris Maron  
Executive Director

## AWARDS AND GRANTS



CATS is fortunate to have been awarded many generous grants in 2016 that support the broad range of our programs and initiatives including land conservation, outdoor education, trail improvements, office supplies, and staffing. Thank you to the following grantors for investing in the Champlain Valley.

**Adirondack Foundation Generous Act** – \$1,750 to cover costs related to sending CATS Stewardship Coordinator to Land Trust Alliance training workshops.

**Adirondack Garden Club's Ellen Lea Paine Memorial Nature Fund** – \$1,000 for outdoor education.

**American Hiking Society** – \$1,000 to support the Volunteer Vacation program.

**Clinton County Complete Streets Program** – \$900 for signs at the Thrall Dam Park Trail.

**Cloudsplitter Foundation** – \$20,000 for purchasing the Wildway Passage property, outdoor education and CATS Long Pond Conservancy's West Shore Conservation Project.

**Essex Community Fund (administered by the Adirondack Foundation)** – \$1,500 in memory of Bruce Klink, a CATS founder, for signs at the new Essex Gateway Trail.

**International Paper Foundation** – \$2,000 to help print and distribute the 2016/2017 CATS Trail Map. *(Note: IP's Ticonderoga Mill also donated the paper for the map produced from trees harvested in Adirondack working forests.)*

**Kelsey Foundation** – \$10,000 for the Long Pond West Shore Conservation Project.

**Klipper Family Fund and the Open Space Institute** – \$70,000 for the Duca Conservation Easement in Westport.

**New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) Professional Development Grant (administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the State Department of Environmental Conservation)** – CATS received the second half of the \$70,000 grant awarded in 2015 to support the Stewardship Coordinator position.

**NYSCPP Transaction Grant** – \$30,000 to support the transaction and trail-building costs for the Duca Conservation Easement.

**Norcross Wildlife Foundation** – \$1,500 to purchase a sign for the CATS office, tools for trail work, and a screen for PowerPoint presentations.



*Thank you to Sid Ward, who donated proceeds totaling over \$3800 from sales of his homemade cutting boards at the Willsboro Craft Fair.*

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

Jeff Allott · 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 · Tom Duca · The Eddy Foundation · Essex County · Rose Chancler and Steve Feinbloom · Matthew Foley · Full and By Farm · Marsha and Bill Harbison · Irene Harbison · Highland Forest, LLC · Peter Jerdo · Cynthia and David Johnston · Sheila and Fred Kapper · Theresa and James Kapper · Kristin and Mark Kimball · Lars Kulleseid · Lakeside School at Black Kettle Farm · Lee Trust · Carol and James Meaker · Penfield Museum · Elizabeth Rapalee · Kathryn and William Reinhardt · Daniel Rivera · Cordelia Sand · Shirley Forest, Inc. · Audrey Sparre · Glenn P. Sweeney · Suzanne E. Tart · William O. Tart · Jane and Jan TerLouw · Three Creeks Farm, LLC · Mary and Frank Walls · Woodside LP · Adirondack Land Trust · The Nature Conservancy · Northeast Wilderness Trust · State of New York · Towns of Westport, Willsboro, Elizabethtown, Lewis, Moriah, Chesterfield



## MAKING NEW TRAILS

As the last part added to the Adirondack Park, the Champlain Valley has little public land and until CATS began, few hiking trails. Every year CATS works with private landowners to allow for trails on their properties. After finding the best route, CATS staff and volunteers make the trails. Some are completed in days; others, like the Sophie's Lair Trail in Willsboro, can take several years because of difficult or wet terrain and the need for bridges and boardwalks. The result is you have wonderful places to enjoy throughout the year.



*At the Hemlock Hill Trail in Westport, Southwoods campers started the trail in summer and CATS volunteers finished it in the snow.*



*Hikers on the Wadhams Overlook Trail look over rooftops to the High Peaks and then walk across several boardwalks volunteers built on the way to the Field and Forest Trail.*

# VOLUNTEER VACATIONERS COMPLETE SOPHIE'S LAIR TRAIL IN WILLSBORO



*We couldn't avoid all the wet areas at the Sophie's Lair Trail so thanks to the American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacation Program, fifteen volunteers spent a week working with CATS Stewardship Coordinator Bill Amadon to build bridges and boardwalks.*





CATS HIKES

Join CATS 2017 Hikes

May 13 - Grand Hike to the Essex Inn  
 June 3 - National Trails Day - Four Hikes in Moriah  
 Sept. 16 - Adirondack Harvest Festival and Hike  
 Details at [champlainareatrails.com](http://champlainareatrails.com)

CATS' goal is to have trails connect Champlain Valley communities so people can "Hike the Lake" on town-to-town trails around Lake Champlain. It will take many steps to get there and that inspires CATS to present hikes to show how anyone can simply chart a course, get out on the land, and do it. We are working toward the day when the trails will mostly go through forests, farms, and fields. In the meantime, going on scenic backroads, a few busier roads, and of course, CATS trails will get you there.

Grand Hike to the Essex Inn

The 2016 Grand Hike began in Wadhams where over 250 people set out on the Wadhams Overlook Trail, made their first hikes on the new Long Valley Trail, enjoyed Oasis 1 at Ted Cornell's Art Farm and followed its trail to the Field and Forest Trail. They continued hiking on several more trails and passed three more oases before arriving for the Block Party at the Essex Inn.



Willsboro School buses took hikers from Essex to Wadhams where the hike began.



The Art Farm Trail featured an oasis, an enjoyable rest, and a beautiful walk to the Field and Forest Trail



Oasis 3, at Lakeside School, provided great refreshments and valley vistas.



Everyone enjoyed the Long Valley Trail's grassy fields and views plus seeing friends along the way.



The narrow path at Rocky Ledges Trail led people through a springtime forest with scenic rock outcrops.



Hikers arriving at the Essex Inn bonged the gong to celebrate finishing the Grand Hike and joining the Block Party.

## CATS HIKES



### Over the Mountain to Lake Champlain Hike

On National Trails Day in June, over 65 hikers took part in the “Over the Mountain to Lake Champlain Hike.” They started in Mineville, walked on the seasonal Mountain Spring Road to Stacey Brook Trail and then to Camp Dudley where they were joined by others for the Celebrate Champlain Area Trails event.



*From Mineville, hikers walked on Bartlett Spring Road to Mountain Spring Road.*



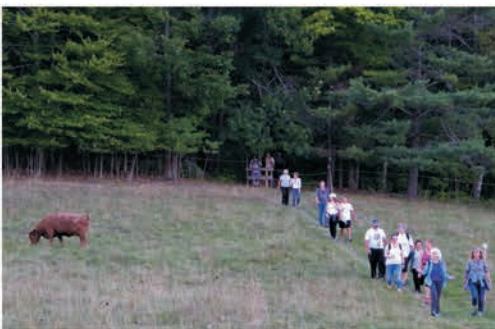
*At the end of Mountain Spring Road, people were happy to get to an oasis.*



*Stacey Brook Trail began by a small pond.*

### Adirondack Harvest Festival Featured Two CATS Hikes

Synergy is the word that describes trails and the resurgence of “local food” farms. With innovative, young farmers setting the trend for locally grown, healthy food and Champlain Area Trails promoting town-to-town hiking, the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism took notice and organized community members, CATS, and the farming community to present the first Adirondack Harvest Festival in September at the Essex County Fairgrounds in Westport. Over 1,500 people came to the event and many joined the Harvest Moon Hike on Friday evening and the Ferry-to-Fairgrounds Hike from Essex to Westport on Saturday.



*The Harvest Moon Hike went from DaCy Meadow Farm in Westport to the Fairgrounds.*



*Former CATS Board Chair Katherine Preston (left) enjoys the Ferry to Fairgrounds Hike with board member Malinda Chapman and her husband Glen.*



*Saturday's hike from Essex to the Adirondack Harvest Festival brought hikers to a fabulous farmers' market.*



## ACHIEVEMENTS - SAVING LAND

**CATS Saves 120 Acres in Split Rock Wildway** – As Tom Duca, of Essex, considered buying 120 acres in Westport, he asked if the property was of conservation interest to CATS. Yes! It was a key parcel in the Split Rock Wildway wildlife corridor linking Split Rock Wild Forest on Lake Champlain to the Adirondack Mountains. Plus, it's part of the view from Coon Mountain and has a portion of the trail we want between Westport and Essex. Thanks to grants from the Klipper Family Fund, Open Space Institute and New York State Conservation Partnership Program along with private contributions, CATS purchased a conservation easement protecting the ecological features and providing for the new Hemlock Hill Trail.



*The Duca Property features farmland, forest and views toward the Adirondack High Peaks. Tom Duca did a “bargain sale” of the conservation easement by selling below its appraised market value.*

**Clinton County Conservation Success** – In 1990, Dick and Leanna DeNeale purchased 128 acres of forest in Beekmantown almost sight unseen. If the woods were cleared, there would be spectacular views but the DeNeales wanted to allow the forest become “old growth.” So they donated a conservation easement to CATS that preserves the woods and allows for a hiking trail.



*Dick and Leanna DeNeale worked with CATS to preserve part of the large intact forest on Murtaugh Hill that serves as research site for SUNY Plattsburgh and where CATS can create a new hiking trail.*



## ACHIEVEMENTS - SAVING LAND

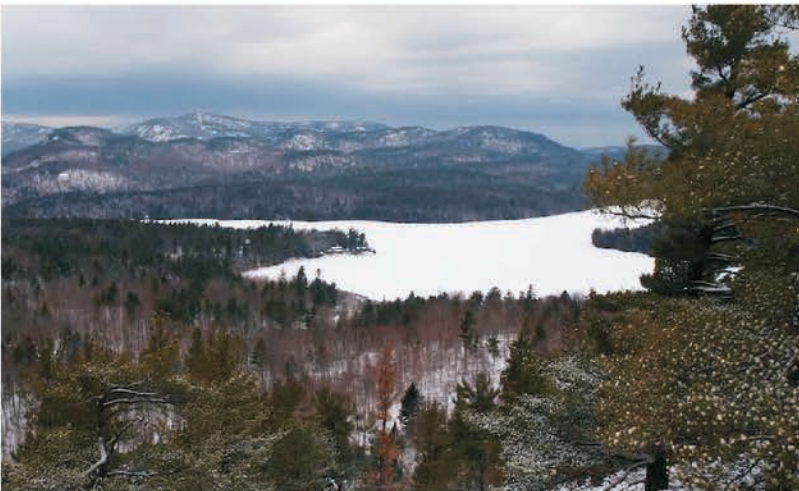


**CATS Long Pond Conservancy Program Preserves Southwest View** – The view toward Long Pond’s southwest corner is a pristine vision of lakefront forest, a small ridge, and the distant High Peaks. Frank White and Christine Babson saved that vista forever when they donated their 25 acres to CATS. A house on the ridge would have marred the view so they worked with CATS’ Long Pond Conservancy Program to arrange for the gift. CATS will make a trail that hikers can access from the Carver Road Trail in Willsboro.



*Two Long Pond enthusiasts and a rainbow highlight the southwest corner of Long Pond where a recent donation conserved the pristine view forever.*

**Progress and a Unique Opportunity at Long Pond** – The CATS Long Pond Conservancy Program is half way toward raising the \$300,000 to purchase 48 acres and preserve the view of the pristine western shoreline. The land is being sold by the 1812 Homestead Living History Museum to help support rebuilding the three buildings recently destroyed by a fire. Therefore, donations to save the land will help the museum and its mission of showing how people lived in the early 1800’s.



*The funds donated to purchase and save 48 acres at Long Pond will preserve views of the western shoreline and support rebuilding the recently burned buildings at the 1812 Homestead Living History Museum – a “most wonderful place for educating people of a time gone by!”*



## OUTDOOR EDUCATION

CATS expanded its Outdoor Education Program in 2016 by presenting 21 fascinating and enjoyable programs for people of all ages.



*Dr. Ari Schwartzberg led a hike to learn about frogs and toads at Black Kettle Farm in Essex.*



*Everyone enjoyed the winter tree identification hike at the Beaver Flow Trail led by renowned naturalist and illustrator Sheri Amsel.*



*The spring Hawk Watch at Coot Hill led by teacher and naturalist Gregg Van Deusen, is one of CATS most popular outdoor education hikes.*

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION



*In a new way to reach out to children, CATS held a “Design Your Dream Trail” workshop led by Erin Hall of Erin C. Hall Studio.*



*In a most unique hike titled “Listening in Nature” Grammy-award winner Taylor Haskins played a variety of instruments along the Hidden Quarry Trail and talked about the nature of sound.*



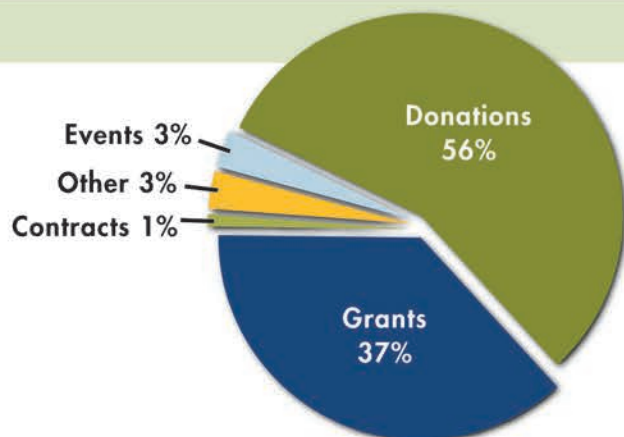
*Frank Shirley led one of the hikes during the “Sustainable Forestry Practices” workshop CATS co-hosted with Shirley Forest, Inc. A month later, we presented a program titled “Old Growth Forests of the Northeast” featuring Dr. Joan Maloof of the Old Growth Forest Network.*



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT BOARD & STAFF

### 2016 INCOME STATEMENT

#### REVENUE

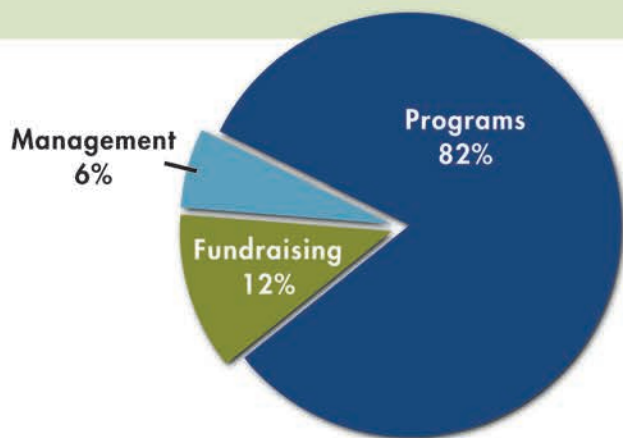


#### Operating Revenue

Donations .....	\$173,432
Grants .....	\$113,650
Contracts .....	\$3,765
Events .....	\$12,130
Other .....	\$11,444
<b>Total Operating Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$314,421</b>
<b>Total Land Conservation Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$7,700</b>

**Total Revenue .....** \$322,121

#### EXPENSES



#### Operating Expenses

Programs .....	\$205,549
Fundraising .....	\$30,080
Management .....	\$15,040
<b>Total Operating Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$250,669</b>

Transfer to Long Pond Fund .....	\$61,972
Transfer to Stewardship Endowment .....	\$7,700
Net Surplus/Deficient .....	\$1,780

**Total Expenses .....** \$322,121

### 2015 BALANCE SHEET

#### Assets

Checking/Savings .....	\$210,252
Fixed Assets .....	\$125,781
Other Assets .....	\$1,543
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>\$337,576</b>

#### Liabilities & Equity

Current Liabilities .....	\$1,962
Stewardship Fund .....	\$32,620
Land Management Fund .....	\$12,500
Long Pond Fund .....	\$131,694
Support Received in Advance .....	\$39,500
Equity .....	\$119,300
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity .....</b>	<b>\$337,576</b>

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 2016

Evan George – *Chair*  
 Delia Thompson – *Vice Chair*  
 Bill Bardeen – *Treasurer*  
 Malinda Chapman – *Secretary*  
 John Davis · Vincent Dupont · Danielle Garneau  
 Catherine Ross Haskins · Anne Lincoln · Nancy Lindquist  
 David McNamara · Rob Powell · Sharp Swan

*Note:* We thank Danielle Garneau and Catherine Ross Haskins for their service and are pleased to have Nadine Lemmon and Dan Keegan fill those positions.

#### STAFF

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

## A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL THE 2016 DONORS



## 2016 CATS SPONSORS



## SYCAMORE LEVEL

Champlain National Bank  
 Chez Lin and Rays  
 Essex Inn on the Adirondack Coast  
 The Galley at Westport Marina  
 Lake Champlain Yoga & Wellness  
 Law Offices of Reginald Bedell  
 Sim\*Vivo



## HICKORY LEVEL

Adirondack Council  
 The Art Farm at Crooked Brook Studios  
 Cloudsplitter Carpentry  
 Dogwood Bread Company  
 Emmet Carter Green Design  
 Heritage Properties of the Adirondacks  
 Julia Rebecca Photography  
 Juniper Hill Farm  
 Northwaters & Langskib Wilderness Programs  
 Peter and Patty Paine  
 Summit Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine  
 Taylor Tree Care, Greenhouse & Nursery



## OAK LEVEL

Covered Bridge Realty  
 William M. Finucane, Attorney at Law



## MAPLE LEVEL

Arcadia Cottages on Willsboro Bay  
 The Birch Store  
 Boquet Liquor Store  
 Boyea's Grocery & Deli  
 Casella Waste Systems, Inc.  
 Cupola House – Lodging on Lake Champlain  
 DaCy Meadow Farm  
 Decker's Flats Greenhouse  
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 Elizabeth Lee, Outdoor Guide  
 Ernie's Market & Deli  
 Hall Design Group  
 International Paper

*We thank all the generous donors that requested their gifts remain anonymous*

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