

President's Report

While walking in the woods in the spring of 2016, I was struck by the abundance and beauty of the mountain laurel bloom. The Land Trust seized this opportunity and quickly organized a member hike through some of the preserved land in town to experience the laurel display up close. As ever, walking the forests and hills of Ashby fills me with gratitude and pleasure.

It has been a rewarding and productive year for the Land Trust. We had a good turnout for our Annual Meeting and 'Raptor Encounter' program presented by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Under the able and enthusiastic leadership of Doug Leab, we sponsored our first rubber duck race, the Ashby Duck Derby.

The goals of the Derby were to offer a fun-for-all Land Trust activity, and to raise some money. We expected to succeed in the fun category and we were delighted at what a successful fundraiser it was as well. Big thanks to Doug for his vision of hundreds of little ducks tumbling down Willard Brook and his willingness to organize the event. Thanks to all the volunteers who swept the course and worked with Doug on the project. Many thanks also to the generous sponsors who contributed some fabulous prizes for the winners.

The Duck Derby was a great success! This year's race is set for Sunday, May 7 at Damon Pond. Post time: 1:00. Come and cheer the ducks on!

This year the Board established a Trails Committee which has been studying issues around new trail development, trail maintenance, and use management. Over the years the trail on the Wiita Conservation Land (Blood Hill) has suffered from over-use and abuse, as have the trails on Mount Watatic. The Land Trust was instrumental in the protection of both of these properties and we share some of the responsibility for caring for them.

Organizationally, the Land Trust continued to grow stronger. We welcomed our newest Board member, Rebecca Walsh. The monitoring committee walked each property and verified compliance with the conservation restrictions; our operating budget moved into the black; the Board met regularly to conduct business; and Board members participated in both the Blood Hill and Mount Watatic management committees.

Thank you for your membership and participation in the work and fun of the Ashby Land Trust. We are always seeking people who are interested in getting actively involved with the Land Trust. If that is you, please contact me. Thank you especially to the Board of Directors who continue to be committed and engaged in fulfilling the mission of the Land Trust.

Duck Derby

2016 saw the first ever Ashby Duck Derby. Over 400 brave rubber ducks expertly maneuvered down Willard Brook in an exhilarating mob as they dashed towards the finish line at Damon Pond! It was a fun and diverting event for all who attended and a successful fund raiser. The 2017 race promises to be just as exciting. Come join us at 1PM on Sunday, May 7. There are great prizes for the lucky winners and a fun time to be had by all.

MAY THE FLOCK BE WITH YOU!

