

NORTHEAST
WILDERNESS
TRUST

2019 Annual Report



VISION *The Growing Necessity of Wild Places*



One has only to step into a wild landscape to experience nature's prosperity and abundance. Trees grow large and die naturally, eventually littering the forest floor with an entanglement of logs and branches that create niche habitats. Cavities in large dead standing trees shelter owls, bats, and flying squirrels, while tip-ups provide dens for foxes and hibernating bears. Hidden beneath the forest floor, undisturbed soils support vast mycorrhizal networks, through which trees share resources and perhaps even communicate.

Wilderness is also a place of respite for people, where we can slow to the glacial pace of land and turn off the excesses of today's gadgetry. In the wild, we can build a relationship with the community of life—one defined by reciprocity rather than dominion—and practice genuine humility.

These values reflect the core value of Northeast Wilderness Trust, that wild nature has a right to exist on its own terms, largely untrammelled by human tinkering.

While the Wilderness Trust's mission—to conserve forever-wild landscapes for nature and people—remains unchanged, the work has taken on new urgency. In recent years, and especially throughout 2019, the surprising capacity of wilderness to sequester and store carbon has gained considerable attention.

Across a spectrum of ecosystems, it is now clear that trees

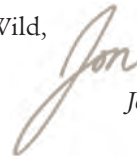
accumulate carbon throughout their entire lifespan, and that old forests are effective carbon sinks. Indeed, carbon storage is a primary benefit complementing wild nature's inherent value.

Sharing this science is critical, which is why we have released the first volume of our new Wild Works series, synthesizing a dozen recent peer-reviewed studies on the capacity of old, unmanaged forests to sequester and store carbon.

I am also pleased to report that the Wilderness Trust added 7,945 acres of permanently protected wilderness across the Northeast in 2019, thanks to conservation partners and wilderness supporters like you. In 2020, we are embarking on our bold new five-year strategic plan, which calls for 25,000 additional forever-wild acres in the Northeast by 2025.

The Wilderness Trust's reach and impact is growing because of you. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

For the Wild,



Jon Leibowitz, Executive Director



BY THE NUMBERS

36,662 total forever-wild acres protected, including...



106

*miles of rivers
and streams*



3,804

*acres of wetlands, ponds,
and riparian areas*



18

*places owned by the
Wilderness Trust*



22

*places protected with
permanent conservation
agreements*



3 million

*metric tonnes of
carbon storage**



In 2019 ...



7,945

new forever-wild acres



6,982

*additional acres we're
working to save*



30

*Forever-Wild Circle
monthly donors*



57

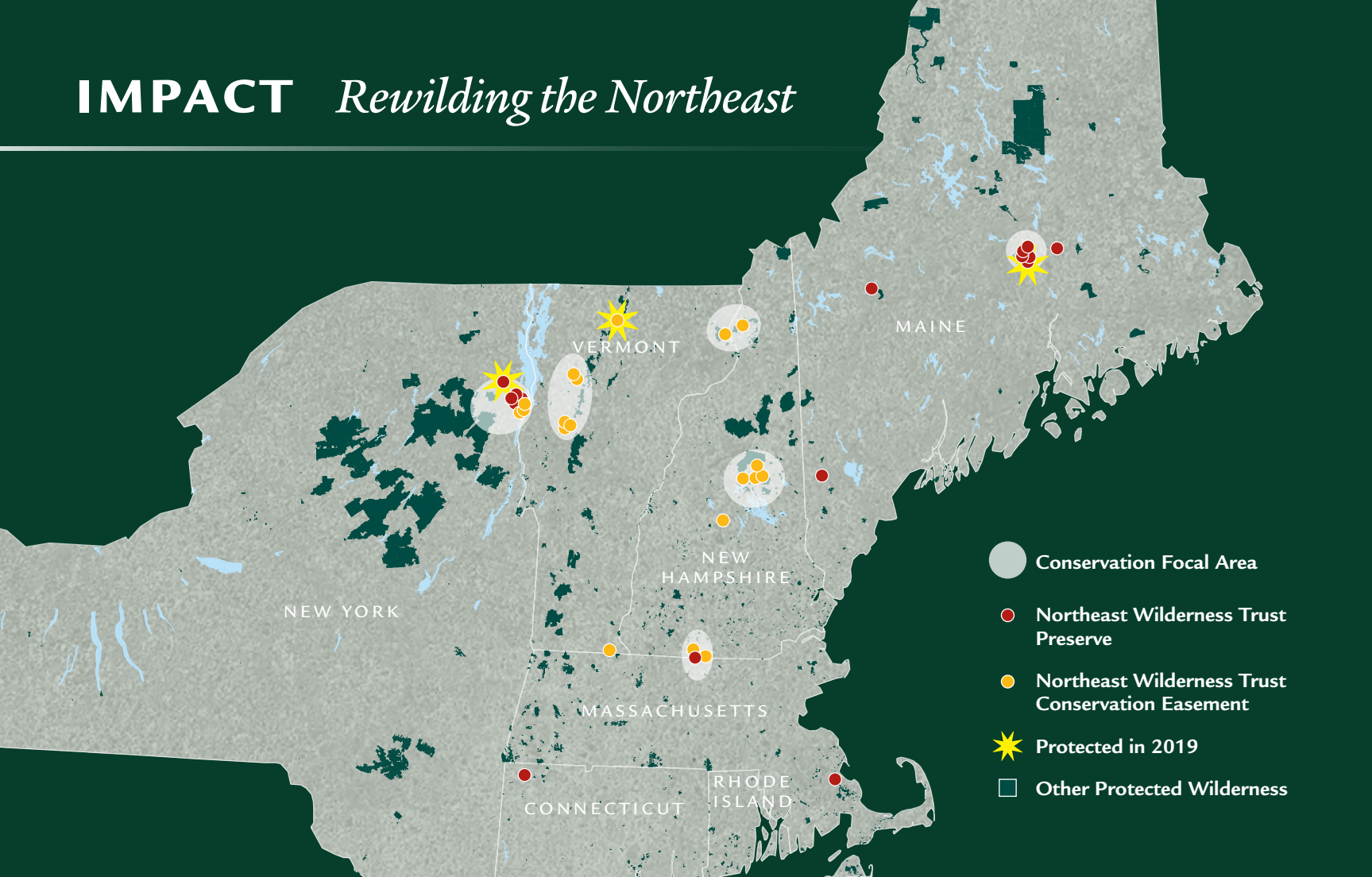
volunteers



96

*students and teachers
learning at Muddy Pond*

IMPACT *Rewilding the Northeast*



2019 in Review

JANUARY Northeast Wilderness Trust commits to sustainable practices by adopting the Green Guarantee. Learn more at newildernesstrust.org/green.

FEBRUARY Community-based conservation begins at Muddy Pond Wilderness Preserve in Massachusetts, engaging students, teachers, and volunteers in the stewardship of a globally rare ecosystem.

MARCH The Ancient Forest Society is established to recognize and celebrate those who make a charitable planned gift for the future.

APRIL Alder Stream Wilderness Preserve in Maine expands with a new entrance. The Nature Conservancy in Vermont donates a forever-wild easement on Burnt Mountain to the Wilderness Trust. Volunteers plant trees at Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve in New Hampshire.

MAY The Wilderness Trust purchases Eagle Mountain Wilderness Preserve in the Adirondacks.

JUNE Shelby Perry, Stewardship Director, walks 55 miles to the future Bramhall Wilderness Preserve in Bridgewater, Vermont as a fundraiser to protect the land. BioBlitz participants identify nearly 200 species on the property in one day.

AUGUST Wild Carbon, the first volume of the Wild Works series, is published. Sophi Veltrop is hired as Outreach Coordinator, and Sophie Ehrhardt takes on the new role of Wildlands Partnership Coordinator.

SEPTEMBER The Wildlands Partnership launches with support from Sweet Water Trust (see page 15). “Untrammelled: The Case for Wild Nature” premieres in Maine.



NOVEMBER Volunteers replace posted signs at Eagle Mountain Wilderness Preserve, welcoming the public to the land for the first time in a century.

DECEMBER The Wilderness Trust announces a new five-year Strategic Plan. At its two-year mark, the Forever-Wild Circle of monthly donors has tripled in membership (see page 16).

Eagle Mountain Wilderness Preserve



Some of New York's greatest biodiversity is found in the low elevations of the eastern Adirondack Park; yet there is much less forever-wild land here than in the rest of the Park. A dramatic step towards rewilding this region came in 2019 when Northeast Wilderness Trust bought 2,434 acres in the heart of the Adirondack Champlain Valley.

The new Eagle Mountain Wilderness Preserve boasts an impressive array of habitats. Peregrine Falcons nest on dramatic cliffs. Native brook trout and eastern pearlshells (rare freshwater mussels) find sanctuary in pristine headwater streams. Wetlands offer nutritious browse for energy-strapped bears, moose, and beavers at the end of a long winter.

Champlain Area Trails is helping the Wilderness Trust to designate a two-mile footpath through the forest. The path will follow a retired logging road, minimizing impact while connecting people to the land. The majority of the property does not have trails, for the benefit of the wildlife that call Eagle Mountain home.

The Preserve is near Jay Mountain Wilderness and Taylor Pond Wild Forest, and lies within a wildlife corridor connecting the northeast Adirondack Mountains to Lake Champlain. To the south, the Split Rock Wildway serves the same purpose. As each kingdom of life faces the uncertainty of a chaotic climate, connected landscapes like these offer hope for migration, adaptation, and a resilient future.

This project was funded by Sweet Water Trust, The Conservation Alliance, Gallogly Family Foundation, Open Space Institute, Cloudsplitter Foundation, and many generous individual donors.

CHESTERFIELD, NEW YORK

Owned Preserve

2,434
total acres

155
acres of wetlands

2
miles of hiking trail

9.4
miles of brooks and river



Burnt Mountain



The vast 5,487-acre Burnt Mountain property is the largest privately conserved, forever-wild landscape in Vermont. The Nature Conservancy in Vermont generously donated a forever-wild easement on this land to Northeast Wilderness Trust in 2019. The land lies just west of the Long Trail, spanning 8 miles of this thru-hiking corridor between Vermont Route 118 and Hazen's Notch.

Along with neighboring lands conserved by the State of Vermont and the Green Mountain Club, Burnt Mountain is part of an 11,000-acre complex of protected land in a remote and wild stretch of the Green Mountains.

Nearly the entire watershed of Calavale Brook, a tributary to the Lamoille River, is cradled within the flanks of Burnt Mountain. As it grows wilder, this headwater stream will provide a glimpse of what wild streams look like and how they evolve over time.

Like nearly all New England forests, Burnt Mountain was managed for timber for nearly two centuries. Yet a few pockets of old forest survived on inaccessible slopes, and with a forever-wild easement in place, the rewilding process has begun on the entirety of this special property.

The land is open to on-foot recreation. Abutting the Long Trail, this unbroken wildland not only protects the homes of wild beings—it creates a refuge of deep solace and peace where people can reconnect with nature. Insulated from the modern world by a vibrant complexity of undomesticated life, this expansive wilderness offers the opportunity to nurture a relationship with the other-than-human.

NORTHERN GREEN MOUNTAINS, VERMONT

Conservation Easement

5,487
total acres

31
*miles of
brooks*

1,646
*feet of elevation
change*

8
miles of Long Trail parallel the land



Alder Stream Wilderness Preserve Addition



Last spring, Northeast Wilderness Trust added a small but important parcel to Alder Stream Wilderness Preserve, thanks to the support of Sweet Water Trust. These 12.9 acres, along a well-traveled road, now serve as the official entrance to the Preserve. The land was owned by the Town of Atkinson, which used an acre to store road salt and sand, and kept the rest forested.

In August, the Wilderness Trust created a small gravel parking lot where the former town storage had been. As the Wilderness Trust's Ambassador Landscape for Maine, the entrance will have a kiosk illustrating the rewilding process.

For years, heavy rainfall would wash the salt and sand downhill into a wetland on Alder Stream Wilderness Preserve. Northeast Wilderness Trust added berms of soil and mulch to block this runoff. A native tree and wildflower planting in 2020 will help rewild the remaining areas

The Alder Stream Wilderness Preserve, at nearly 7,000 acres, is open to quiet backcountry exploration. It contains one of the largest and most varied freshwater wetland systems in Maine, and lies within a 20,000-acre complex of conservation land.

In 2010, this Preserve helped launch the Wilderness Trust's Wild Carbon program, which has generated more than \$400,000 for wilderness conservation. The new Wildlands Partnership (see page 15) expands this program by using the voluntary carbon market to generate long-term revenue for land trusts that add forever-wild restrictions to their land.

ATKINSON, MAINE

Owned Preserve

12.9

new forever-wild acres

1st

official public access point

6,824

acres open to on-foot recreation

41

culverts removed from the Preserve





In the suburbs of southeastern Massachusetts, Muddy Pond Wilderness Preserve offers a wild haven for nature and people. The Northeast Wilderness Trust established the Preserve in 2018, and has since been rewilding the land and connecting students and residents with this Ambassador Landscape of wild nature.

The Preserve sits at the northern edge of the Atlantic Coastal Pine Barrens' range. This globally rare forest is found only in Southeastern Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Long Island. Since the 1980s, sprawl has boomed south of Boston and most of the area's Pine Barrens have been destroyed or divided into small, disconnected parcels.

In this context, Muddy Pond Wilderness Preserve offers a redeeming glimmer of hope. Within the Preserve, the nearby hum of traffic is muffled by the songs of frogs, birds, or crickets. In early spring, amphibians lay their eggs, wildflowers blossom, and turtles dig nests. Through the summer, rare and endangered plants like Plymouth gentian (left) and New England boneset emerge from the waters of Muddy Pond.

Joe Falconeiri, Southern New England Land Steward for the Wilderness Trust, is forging partnerships with local schools and organizations. More than 115 students, teachers, and volunteers have hiked the trails, explored Muddy Pond's shores, and interacted with the land as an outdoor classroom. They have helped to haul out trash, close ATV trails, and hang signs.

Their commitment to this land shows that a place does not have to be isolated or "untouched" to become wilderness—communities can choose to reserve some places for nature first, no matter where they are.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Farewell

After many years of dedicated service, two valued Board members say goodbye as their terms end.

Annie Faulkner | “The work and accomplishments of Northeast Wilderness Trust are a major source of hope and inspiration to me. Participating in efforts to conserve so much wild land and working alongside such dedicated, interesting, and fun people have been great privileges. It is gratifying to see our culture finally begin to understand and value old, wild, unmanaged forests for their great potential and innumerable gifts. I look forward to watching staff and board guide the rising tide of climate consciousness and wild forest reverence. Go Team!”



Dean Lizotte | “I step aside from the Northeast Wilderness Trust forever grateful to my colleagues who, through their incredible knowledge and dedication, have broadened and deepened my appreciation for wildlands. The tangible and intangible benefits of preserving these lands are many, including their important role in addressing the immediate dangers of climate change. The Wilderness Trust is uniquely positioned to have a real impact in these challenges. While there continue to be headwind gusts, the Wilderness Trust and its supporters are causing the breezes to shift, filling the sails of necessary change.”



Welcome

The Wilderness Trust welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors in 2019.

Rick Rancourt | Rick is a Certified Public Accountant, currently working as the controller of a fast-growing tech company in Vermont. He previously worked for a large public accounting firm performing audits and other financial reporting services. Rick is a wilderness enthusiast and lives in Stowe, Vermont with his wife and son.



Henry Tepper | Henry is a conservation consultant and an instructor at the Harvard University Extension School and at Brandeis University. He has helped protect nearly one million acres around the world. Henry formerly worked for The Nature Conservancy and as the President of Mass Audubon. He lives with his family in Lincoln, Massachusetts.



ANNOUNCING THE WILDLANDS PARTNERSHIP

The Wildlands Partnership is a new strategy to accelerate forever-wild conservation. The Wilderness Trust will offer financial support to land trusts in exchange for forever-wild protections, either on new acquisitions or land already owned by the partner. The Partnership supports the “Protect” pillar of the Wilderness Trust’s five-year strategic plan and will hasten the pace of wilderness conservation.

Did you know? Many properties owned by land trusts lack conservation easements. Adding an easement to land owned by land trusts is a critical step to ensure conservation stands the test of time.

Learn more at newildernesstrust.org/wp





Member Spotlight

Forever-Wild Circle members provide Northeast Wilderness Trust with reliable support through monthly donations. These gifts create a steady financial base that allows the Wilderness Trust to spend less time on fundraising and more time on protecting wild landscapes for nature and people.

This year, the Wilderness Trust is thanking new and current Forever-Wild Circle members with custom bandannas. Printed on hemp and organic cotton cloth, they feature the artwork of Vermont painter Patricia Leahey Meriam and are hand-dyed with homegrown indigo by Honey Hill Studios.

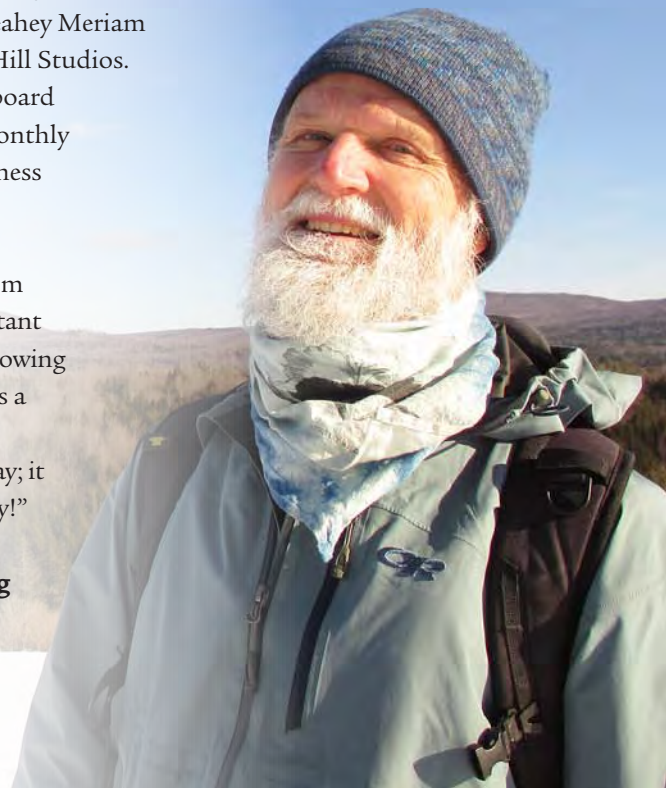
Brett Engstrom, an ecologist and Wilderness Trust board member, recently joined the Forever-Wild Circle as a monthly donor. Brett first became involved in Northeast Wilderness Trust in the early 2000s, when he conducted ecological inventories of Champlain Valley properties.

“When I learned more about the Wilderness Trust from other naturalists, I realized they were doing really important work that no one else was doing,” said Brett. “They’re allowing

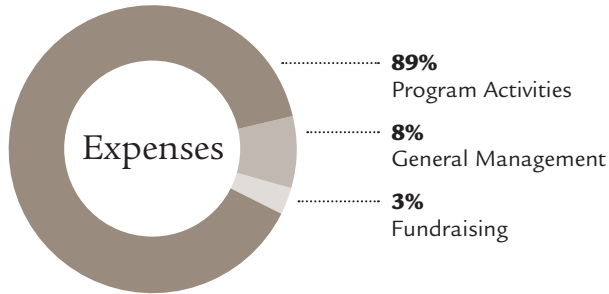
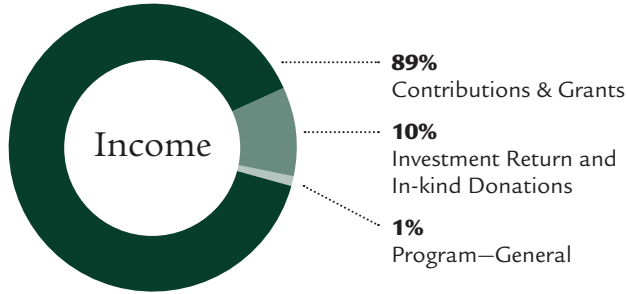
natural processes to play out, which is what really thrills me as a naturalist. Forever-wild is a radical, much-needed way of looking at the landscape. So I’m a staunch supporter now.”

“The bottom line for me is supporting the organization for the long term in a steady way; it makes all the sense in the world,” said Brett. “And to get a bandanna on top of it is just gravy!”

We invite you to become a monthly donor at newildernesstrust.org/circle or by using the enclosed donation envelope. You will receive a custom 2020 bandanna (while supplies last) as our thanks for your generous support of wilderness conservation!



Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2018–19



Northeast Wilderness Trust Corporation was incorporated in 2002 in Vermont as a 501(c)3 organization. All contributions to the Wilderness Trust are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Audited financial statements available upon request.



Forever-Wild
Circle 2020
Bandanna

Summary Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Cash	1,327,075
Pledges receivable	608,507
Conservation land	6,641,436
Investments	2,928,277
Other assets	80,477

Total Assets **\$11,585,772**

Liabilities & Net Assets

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	26,609
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Net assets

Without donor restrictions	
<i>Undesignated</i>	7,267,806
<i>Board designated, stewardship fund</i>	2,628,276
With donor restrictions	1,663,081

11,559,163

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$11,585,772**

*Northeast Wilderness Trust conserves
forever-wild landscapes for nature and people.*

Staff

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Wildlands Partnership Coordinator

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Stewardship Director

Sophi Veltrop
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Wetlands at Eagle Mountain Wilderness Preserve;
Peregrine Falcon (front) *Brendan Wiltse*