

# Highlights From the Region 2021 Annual Report



Kauiua Farmer

*Searching for turtles in Mountain Brook, Devan Preserve, Marlborough.*

See story page 4

# Common Ground

## It is said that love of the land is a great unifier,

yet, in these divided times, environmental protection and climate change are among the most polarizing issues. What is a land trust to do?

First, prioritize the needs of our communities. Then, connect with diverse people on shared interests: children & nature, clean water, wildlife, forests, farms, health & recreation. Build trust. And come together to work toward a brighter future.

The Monadnock Conservancy is doing all that — and more. In this Annual Report, you'll read about protecting rivers and brooks so that waters run clean. About new and improved trails. Partnerships with other nonprofits and agencies. About people and families who take the long view.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Learn more about the [Monadnock Conservancy's key values and mission at \*\*MonadnockConservancy.org\*\*](https://www.monadnockconservancy.org)



Monica Poole



The outdoors gives kids a place to exercise, be creative, explore the natural world, and experience joy.

## Nature Park Opens

**Sixty kids smile** at the Winchester Learning Center when they head outside to the new nature park next door. The park, at the corner of Route 10 and Lawrence Street in Winchester, is also open to the public.

The 3.5-acre property is owned by the center, a United Way-funded agency that provides family resources and programming for ages 6 weeks to 7 years old. Five years ago, executive director Roberta Royce dreamed of building a nature park on the land, but her organization lacked the resources to do so. At the same time, the Conservancy was searching for ways to bring nature closer to people, especially kids, but lacked a suitable site.

Together, the two groups accomplished what neither could do alone. Now the children visit the park many times each week, running along a gravel trail that is passable in a wheelchair or stroller, exploring side paths, and skipping along a boardwalk.



Monica Poole

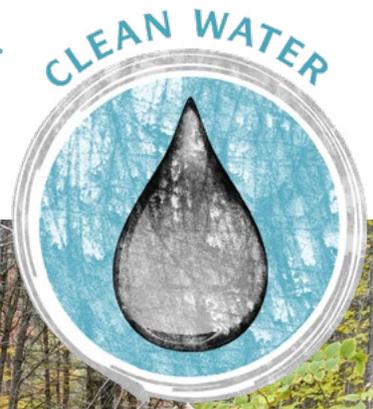
“

The children look for animal tracks and birds to identify. Our hope is they will be able to observe and draw what they see or feel when they are in the park.

”

– Roberta Royce, executive director, Winchester Learning Center

Caring for land goes hand-in-hand with caring for water. It's perhaps the most important natural resource for the existence of life — of people, plants, and wildlife.



## A Healthier Hale Brook

**Ann De Lancey added 5.6 acres** along Hale Brook in Alstead to an existing 54.7-acre conservation easement that she and her late husband donated in 2009. Only a few miles long, Hale Brook is a major source of water for Lake Warren, which then drains to the Cold River and on to the Connecticut River. Ann understands that protecting clean water is not just about the immediate shoreline of a lake or pond, but also about the brooks, wetlands, woodlands, and fields upstream. By conserving the land, Hale Brook stays healthy and contributes to the water quality of Lake Warren and beyond.



Anne McBride

## Riverbanks More Resilient

**A section of the Cold River in Walpole**, just above where it joins the Connecticut River, has been eroding severely ever since a 2005 flood destabilized its banks. Perley Lund and Chip Wood, owners of conserved farmland on either side of the river, could see the problems firsthand as their soil washed away with each big storm. Last summer, thanks to a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Connecticut River Conservancy, a restoration project helped make the riverbanks more resilient to extreme weather driven by climate change. A team of engineers and heavy equipment operators embedded root balls of massive trees in the banks. These masses will slow floodwaters, preventing erosion and allowing the banks to revegetate naturally. In time, the timber will decompose, but the new vegetation should hold the riverbanks in place, protecting the soil and water and re-creating important riparian habitat.



Alex Metzger



Conservation is also for the critters. Food, water, shelter, and space — things they need to thrive — are best found in large blocks of undeveloped land.

## Increase Wildlife Habitat Protection

**A couple in Rindge added 98.5 acres** to an existing 197-acre conservation easement they donated in 2009. They love this block of conservation land for the profusion of plants, the majesty of the trees, the birds, and the ability to track wildlife. They have seen beaver, raccoon, muskrat, and river otter. There are herons, ducks, red-tailed hawks, turkeys, and barred owls. Deer are plentiful, and there may be moose in the southern wetland. Such diversity is thanks to a mix of habitat types: northern hardwood forest, fields, apple trees, shrub wetlands, vernal pools, streams, and a hemlock grove. The couple realizes how fragile the natural world is and wanted to leave a gift for the next generation — of animals and people.



Anne McBride

## Gather Data on Mammals and Reptiles

**Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological** and Rick Brackett, land manager for the Monadnock Conservancy, are leading projects at the Devan Preserve in Marlborough to document which species live on and benefit from the conserved land, a block of 523 mostly forested acres. They saw tracks and other signs (such as claw marks, tree rubbings, and scat) of bobcat, coyote, grey and red squirrel, snowshoe hare, mink, fisher, deer, moose, otter, and black bear. In the spring and early summer, teams of community science volunteers helped them search along Mountain Brook for turtles and set up “hotels” to temporarily collect and count snakes. The data gathered will guide decisions about protecting and managing the wildest of our conservation lands.



Rick Brackett

“

We’ve seen some pretty sizeable bobcat out there. We saw two... they’re probably a mating pair.

”

—Jeff Littleton, Moosewood Ecological



Richard Popovic

This region is covered in trees, which regulate air quality, filter water, provide wildlife habitat, and offer renewable timber.



## Student-Interns Lead Forestry Research

**Research and education are priorities** at the Maynard Forest in Gilsum, where, in 2010, a timber harvest established 12 forest openings. By partnering with Antioch University New England, graduate students get the chance to carry out real-life work as part of a long-term study. This past summer, Hannah Cuzner visited the forest openings several times each month, noting the size and health of young trees in fenced and unfenced areas. Her data, along with that collected in prior years, reveals an important pattern: browsing by abundant deer in unfenced areas is hindering tree growth, especially red oak, a valuable species for both timber and wildlife. Going forward, it will be critically important to manage forests in ways that balance wildlife and human needs.



**For many farmers, land is their most valuable asset. Conserving productive soil protects farmers' livelihoods and sustains the region's agricultural heritage.**



## Bolster Beloved Community Farms

**Vegetable farming is a tough business**, but the families who run Pete's Stand in Walpole and Picadilly Farm in Winchester are dedicated to making it work. Now, to make their lives a little easier, both are investing in the future by selling conservation easements to the Monadnock Conservancy. These permanent conservation agreements will provide income to the farms while ensuring that they can never be converted to alternative uses. While such projects often take years to complete, along the way there are milestones worth celebrating, such as the nearly \$400,000 in federal, state, and private funds that have already been committed to the projects. This includes two NH Farm Future Fund grant awards, through which each farm receives \$20,000, half of which goes toward the conservation easements and half for business planning and other technical assistance. Now that's something to celebrate.





If the past year has shown us anything, it's that access to parks, trails, and the outdoors is vital to the well-being of our communities.

## New Boardwalk at Cranberry Meadow Pond Trail

**Up until last summer**, a popular section of this trail east of Old Street Road in Peterborough crossed a wetland on low plank bridges, where seasonal high water meant wet feet and frequent repairs. But now a new design is two feet higher. The elevated, 400-foot boardwalk is better for the health of the wetland and, with climate change increasing the intensity of rainstorms, it's better for our feet, too. Thank you to a Student Conservation Association crew and a team of local volunteers who collectively put in a total 430 hours on this trail improvement project. The boardwalk is used every day, and people are stronger, healthier, and happier for it.



Richard Pendleton

## Expand Protected Area Along Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway

**Often referred to as a “beautiful, remote, well-kept secret,”** the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway is a 48-mile hiking trail running north-south from peak to peak. A half-mile section in Dublin and 132 acres surrounding the trail, long a local priority for conservation, are now protected and will be known as the Gertrude Russell Forest. The acquisition of this former Girl Scouts wilderness camp by the Monadnock Conservancy ensures the public will have permanent access to the Greenway and that the land and water (frontage on Howe Reservoir and Wight Pond) will remain undeveloped. By prioritizing recreation and working with partners at the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail Club, this section of trail can be improved in the years to come and serve generations of hikers.

Anne McBride

“

We are excited that the property will continue to be accessible for the community and allow everyone to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors.

”

– Patricia Mellor, CEO, Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains



# Beyond Our Years and Decades



**A passion for the Monadnock region runs deep in Dan Hall's family.** As a young boy, he helped his father plant 20,000 white pine seedlings on their Alstead land, turning abandoned hayfields back into forest. The property, which Dan protected with a conservation easement, has welcomed four generations of his family and instilled a deep conservation ethic. His daughter, Phoebe Danahy, now lives there and has memories of playing in the pine forest.

Having recently celebrated his 100th birthday, Dan has had time to reflect on what's truly important in life. "Conservation is important for protecting natural resources, water, and recreation," he says. That's why he's a monthly donor and a member of the Monadnock Forever Society (which means he included the Conservancy in his estate plans). It's so rewarding to, like Dan, invest in the land and nature for the decades to come.

Learn more at [MonadnockConservancy.org/give/planned-giving](https://MonadnockConservancy.org/give/planned-giving), or call Lindsay Tafias, development director, at 603-357-0600, ext. 113.



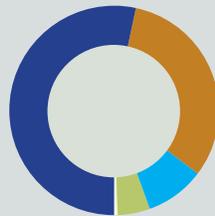
Lindsay Tafias

## Financial Summary

**Gifts from individuals, businesses, and foundations** comprised the majority of revenue in fiscal year 2021. Land protection projects tend to be cyclical, and few closed during that period. As a result, total spending was low as compared to prior years. This made FY21 fundraising and administration expenses appear abnormally high as a percentage of total spending. In fact, they were down from FY20, and fundraising and administration together comprised less than 14% of total spending over the past three years. Thanks to your support, the Conservancy remains well positioned to act as new opportunities arise.

### Income

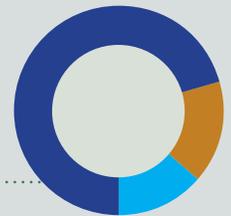
■ Individual, business, & foundation donations	\$ 1,233,733
■ Investment gains	\$ 736,136
■ Investment & endowment income	\$ 208,330
■ PPP loan forgiveness	\$ 116,000
■ Programs & other	\$ 5,763
■ Government grants	\$ 2,600



**Total \$ 2,302,562**

### Expenses

■ Programs	
Land protection	\$ 360,872
Land management & recreation	\$ 110,864
Community conservation	\$ 70,773
Outreach	\$ 100,732
Stewardship	\$ 168,984
	<b>\$ 812,225</b>
■ Fundraising	\$ 180,741
■ Administration	\$ 153,918



**Total \$ 1,146,884**

The Monadnock Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) organization.

The above numbers reflect the 2021 fiscal year (October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021) and, at the time of printing, were unaudited. Audited financial statements will be available upon request.



Together, protecting forever  
the land we love

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Founded in 1989, the Monadnock Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust working with you and your neighbors in 39 towns throughout the Monadnock region to protect the land and water of southwestern New Hampshire.



Learn more at  
[MonadnockConservancy.org](http://MonadnockConservancy.org)

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*Thanks to your support...*

“ Over the years we’ve been growing at Picadilly Farm, an abiding aspiration has been to ensure that future farmers are able to continue working and producing on this land. Now that is within reach. ”

– Bruce and Jenny Wooster,  
owners of a Community Supported  
Agriculture farm soon to be protected

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Stacy Cibula