THE NEWSLETTER OF COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA FOREST LINK



FALL 2016

INSIDE

Review of Reading the Mountains of Home	3
Trail Camera Use for Tracking	5
Snakes in the Cold Hollow to Canada Corridor	7
Local Sugarmakers Buy Conserved Land	9
Vermont's Wild & Scenic Rivers	10
Upcoming Events	12

BOARD & STAFF

CHC BOARD Charlie Hancock - Board Chair, Montgomery Nancy Patch, Enosburgh Ward Heneveld, Enosburgh Chris Damato, Enosburgh Mary Schwartz, Bakersfield Bill McGroarty, Richford Forrest Dunnavant - Newsletter CHC STAFF Bridget Butler - Program Director

PHOTOS: JO ANNE WAZNY

coldhollowtocanada.org

Our Work Together

By Charlie Hancock, Board Chair

Hi friends, and welcome to the Fall 2016 edition of our quarterly newsletter! We hope that this edition of *Connections* finds you looking forward to cooler days, crisp nights, and the slow transition as the landscape is painted in a pallet of reds, oranges and yellows.

I m writing this the morning after attending a gathering of Trackers, held in Montgomery. Last night almost thirty people from around the Cold Hollow to Canada region (as well as partners from Quebec) came together to celebrate, coordinate, and plan for the future. This crew represented three years of participants in the Keeping Track Monitoring Program training, a year-long class which not only teaches tracks and scat, but trains participants to see the landscape in a new light and understand how wildlife populations move across it. Having completed the training, those present represented a core of citizen scientists working with CHC to gather data from across our corner of the Northern Forest Linkage, seeking to assist in local and regional planning for the future. We chowed on burgers, swapped stories over corn bread and quinoa salad, and doubled down on our commitment to continue and build a robust data set around the bear and bobcat, the moose and otter, which share our forests and wetlands to better inform our place as members of this community—as Aldo Leopold put it—which include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land.

continued on page 2

oldhollowtocanada.or \bigcirc \angle

The evening reminded me what an impact a committed group of dedicated individuals can have. I look at the Keeping Track Program we celebrated last night. I look at the Cold Hollow Wood Lots project, which brings together landowners on a shared landscape to plan collectively for their common resource and leverage a greater cumulative impact on habitat and forest resiliency. I look at the WildPaths project, which hosts a platform for anyone in our region to contribute to our knowledge of how wildlife move, helping to focus our conservation efforts around habitat connectivity. I look at the numerous projects we're engaged with our partners on, including the innovative venture with Bear Creek Environmental to use Lidar technology in monitoring woods roads to mitigate erosion and protect water quality. The cumulative impact of this work represents the mission of CHC in action: fostering thoughtful stewardship of our woodlands, planning for the future of resilient human and animal communities, and increasing the pace of conservation in our region.

I hope to see you all on October 27th as we celebrate this work at the Montgomery Grange Hall with an evening of great food and wonderful company. The keynote speaker at this year's Annual Gathering will be John Elder, Middlebury College Professor and author of *Reading The Mountains of Home*. In this issue you'll find more info on our Annual Gathering, including a review of John's book There's also news about game camera work in our region, an update on the WildPaths project, and an update on the Atlas Timberland news from our region.

One last thing before you dive into this issue: as we head into the last part of the year please keep Cold Hollow to Canada in mind as you plan your charitable giving. Our annual membership drive will kick off soon (and you can also click that "contribute" button on the website) to raise the dollars that make this work possible. Thanks, and all the best.



CHC ANNUAL GATHERING with guest John Elder



Cold Hollow to Canada Annual Gathering *with guest John Elder*

Thursday, October 27th at 6:00 pm Montgomery Grange Hall, Montgomery

RSVP requested. Suggested donation of \$10 the evening of the event. Contact: Bridget at <u>bridget@coldhollowtocanada.org</u>

someplace else.

Join us for an evening to celebrate Cold Hollow to Canada's accomplishments and our outlook for 2017. We'll enjoy a catered dinner together at the Montgomery Grange Hall and hear from our guest speaker, John Elder, Middlebury College emeritus professor and author of *Reading the Mountains of Home*. Elder will share his thoughts on Vermont's forested landscape and the place we call home. <u>Please visit our website to RSVP for the event</u>.

REVIEW OF *Reading the Mountains* of Home by John Elder

By Ward Heneveld

A nyone who loves Vermont should read John Elder's *Reading the Mountains of Home*. Elder's book, written in the early 1990s, was the result of a year of walks in the Bristol Cliffs Wilderness Area near his home. He draws from Robert Frost's poem "Directive" to record and reflect on the natural and human history of these mountains and forests and of Bristol itself. Early in the book Elder, an English and Environmental Studies professor at Middlebury College, shares that after almost 20 years living in Vermont what he's written is the result of his own search to find what everyone seeks: "wholeness within their own landscapes". His elegant and provocative insights and his passion for the place he lives have helped me understand my own passion for our landscape around Cold Hollow in northern Vermont. I think the book will do the same for others whose spirits are lifted, like mine are, whenever we get back to Vermont after being

Each chapter starts with a sequential stanza from Robert Frost's poem "Directive". Throughout the book Elder analyzes the poem in relation to his "mountains of home" and what that place tells him about itself and ourselves if we look at it carefully. For example, Chapter One "A Wilderness of Scars" starts with the poem's opening lines:



REVIEW OF READING THE MOUNTAINS OF HOME by John Elder

FALL 2016 Back out of all this now too much for us, Back in a time made simple by the loss Of detail, burned, dissolved, and broken off Like graveyard marble sculpture in the weather, There is a house that is no more a house Upon a farm that is no more a farm And in a town that is no more a town.

Professor Elder then describes what he sees in the Bristol Cliffs Wilderness on a walk in the woods above his house and uses what he has seen to parse the meaning of this opening to Frost's poem. As the reader might expect, in this designated Wilderness he sees signs of former human use and residence that tell him that this forest was at one time not a wilderness at all. Elder returns home feeling "a new urgency to become rooted and at home in these woods" despite realizing, as the chapter ends, that he is "making (his) way home through the wilderness along a trail of all that has been lost."

In every chapter Elder lovingly and provocatively describes the seasonal splendor and the natural and human history of the woods, streams, and topography in the Bristol landscape. He evokes images of a creek's flow, the scars on trees, 19th century logging roads, rock outcrops, seasonal vegetation, and even a crashed airplane. Here's how he describes a mature sugar maple in the woods near his house: "Its trunk, luminous with the reflected glory of the maple's top, records a world of interwoven lives. The bark is a rugged amalgam of gray and tan, with corky segments curling outward almost like hickory bark. Occasionally, a stripe of bare wood is exposed, showing long thin cracks like those in ice-tried granite, but not yet with any of those little wasp borings that presage the arrival of woodpeckers and spell the beginning of the end." For me this is as vivid as Frost's succinct poetic images of trees in "Directive": "a few old pecker-fretted apple trees" and "the instep arch of an old cedar at the waterside". I wish I were able to look so carefully at what's in my woods. Articulating for others what I see would be even more difficult. I am grateful to Professor Elder for translating what he sees into beautiful image-provoking prose for the rest of us.

Frost's poem and Professor Elder's walks in his "mountains of home" help him explore the joys and ambiguities of making this landscape home for him and his family. To do that he uses anecdotes about the

town's and his own history. For example, he shares two incidents from a 19th-century Bristol manuscript to introduce a story about his fear when his 14-year-old son didn't come home from the Wilderness before dark one evening. In one of the incidents a small child dies and in the other in 1806 a child wanders off and is then found, but not by his father. That night in bed after his son and a friend have been found by other searchers, Professor Elder describes his "confused sensations" as he contemplates his failure to save his son and reflects on the feelings of those long-ago fathers. Elsewhere, he recounts his children's finding out through conversations with kids at school that their family won't be considered Vermonters for at least two more generations. In addition, the reader knows throughout the book that Professor Elder is building the canoe Tribute as a memorial to his father who died the year before. It is no surprise to find that the book's final chapter centers on the canoe's first two times in the water. Reading the Mountains of Home culminates with Professor Elder and his adolescently-estranged son descending together through white water on Otter Creek. Both the natural and personal combine in this exciting outing to end the book as Frost's poem ends:

Here are your waters and your watering place. Drink and be whole again beyond confusion.

I think I am as passionate about my own place that looks out onto Cold Hollow in Enosburgh as Professor Elder is about his landscape. I think he also shares my own frightening certainty that none of us fully belongs anywhere and certainly not forever. Perhaps his and my own feelings about living in Vermont may come in good part from the similarities in our backgrounds. We both grew up in northern California with outings in the Sierras, and we graduated from the same semirural liberal arts college in Southern California at the foot of a mountain range. Both of us moved to Vermont as adults and stayed, and I suspect that in our maturity Professor Elder, like me, doesn't think much about living anywhere else. And I love Robert Frost's poetry, though perhaps not as much or as thoughtfully as Professor Elder. His skill in explaining what Frost says in his poem had me saying again and again "oh, so that's what Frost means". Thanks to Reading the Mountains of Home I am now "reading" more richly the landscape where I live.

TRAIL CAMERA USE FOR TRACKING

By Joan Hildreth, CHC Board Member

ur Keeping Track Monitoring Program (KTMP) team has been monitoring a transect in Montgomery four times per year since 2011. Using a standardized protocol, we document evidence of the following focal species: bear, moose, bobcat, lynx, fisher, mink, and river otter. This information is then entered into a database for analysis, with results being utilized for assessment, planning and other purposes.

Key elements of the KTMP training process involve learning where to look for, and how to identify, wildlife tracks and other sign. During quarterly walks of the transect, we document tracks, scat, claw marks, hair, scent posts, bedding sites, barking, rubs and other sign with photos, GPS coordinates and written survey forms. Of course, this means that we are there after the evidence has been left, without actually having had the opportunity to see the animal.

Setting up a trail camera, also referred to as "game camera" or "deer camera", has been a great addition to what we do; we get to see the animals



in the form of still images or videos without bothering them. We choose a camera's location based on our findings of particularly intriguing behaviors/activities or questions we might have. It should be noted that the camera we use has infrared lighting because it does not have the bright flash of incandescent lighting which could spook wildlife.

When we first started using a trail camera a few years ago in 2012, we set it up for taking still photos and only left it in one place for a couple of weeks at a time. We did capture a number of great images which confirmed some of our KTMP findings.

In the fall of 2015, we decided to try the video mode. The result of our first attempt was exciting! It showed two black bears feeding on fruit beneath an apple tree, with a third one climbing down from the tree at the end of the clip. We realized that, although still photos are great, it was even more fun to see the animals in action. Not only were videos more enjoyable to watch as compared to stills, but they provided additional important information about the animals and their behavior. We were sold on video mode!

This spring we put the camera up in a grove of red pines where we had previously captured still photos of bears marking trees, hoping to get some videos, too. We left it there for over two months and ended up hitting the jackpot! There were eight videos of bears marking the trees. Not only did we have confirmation of our findings based on other sign; we had a better sense of the frequency and timing of marking behavior, the various styles of marking, and the number of different bears using those trees. Although we're not wildlife biologists, we could also get a layperson's sense of the general condition of the bears. In this case, all of those in the videos looked to be in great shape.

continued on page 6







JOAN HILDRETH

We then moved the camera from the red pine grove and placed it in another part of the transect where we had previously found bear sign, and left it there until our team's summer outing. When the team arrived at the camera's new location, we checked for sign, but did not find any. When we later checked the camera, though, we found that there was a video from three days prior of a bear rubbing its back on a tree we had looked at closely, or so we thought, and had seen nothing! This experience demonstrated yet another value of the camera. It let us know that there had been activity in an area where we had somehow missed the signs.

Not only does having photo/video evidence of the focal species which our KTMP team is tracking further support our other findings of various sign, but it also helps to keep us motivated and excited about the work we do. It has been wonderful for us to actually see the wildlife we track without disturbing them! In addition, sharing the photos and videos with members of the community has been educational, and it has helped to increase others' appreciation for wildlife. Witnessing these amazing animals in their natural environment is truly a privilege, and it reinforces a strong commitment to doing what we can to protect their core habitat and to maintain connectivity across the spectacular Northern Forest which we all call home.

Check out some of the videos we've captured on the Cold Hollow to Canada website at: <u>http://bit.ly/ColdHollowKTMP</u>. If you know of any infrared game cameras which would be available for the KTMP teams' use, please let us know. They would be put to great use, and we would be happy to share our findings! Thank you.

Snakes in the Cold Hollow to Canada Corridor

By Jim Andrews, VT Reptile & Amphibian Atlas

ermont has a total of 11 confirmed snake species. One additional species, the Eastern Hog-nosed Snake, may breed in extreme southeastern Vermont. Of these, only three species are found at high elevations and in the Northeast Kingdom. The two most cold-tolerant species are the Common Gartersnake and the little Red-bellied Snake. One of their advantages is that they both give live birth rather than lay eggs like many other snakes do. Egg-laying snakes need to lay their eggs in places that are consistently warm enough to incubate those eggs. These places are few and far between in colder and shadier parts of the state. Some snakes such as Milksnakes take advantage of the heat given off by manure or compost piles to help incubate their eggs and extend their range. Live-bearing snakes can take the developing young within their bodies with them from sunny spot to sunny spot as the sun moves and conditions change. Another advantage for colder



JIM ANDREWS



JIM ANDREWS

climates is relatively small body size. Shorter and thinner snakes can heat up quickly. Heavy-bodied snakes such as Northern Watersnakes and Timber Rattlesnakes would have a harder time getting up to their optimal body temperature of somewhere in the mid 80's F. The one egg-laying snake that is able to survive in the northern and northeastern extremes of the state is the Ring-necked Snake. It is also a short, thin, snake, but it has another cold adaptation, it retains its eggs within its body for most of their development, so that they only need to be outside their mother's body for 10-20 days depending on the temperature.

The Cold Hollow to Canada Corridor lies right along the border of this cold zone, with only the three most cold-tolerant snake species known from the northern and eastern portions of the corridor. However, in the lowlands of the western and southern portions of the corridor, two additional snake species are possible. These are the Milksnake, an egg layer sometimes called the Spotted Adder; and the DeKay's Brownsnake, a livebearing snake known almost exclusively from the Lake Champlain Basin. All five of these species are non-venomous. Check out the map of the known range of the Milksnake to see how it follows the western edge of the Cold Hollow to Canada Corridor. FALL

oldhollowtocanada.or§

Our knowledge of the current range of snakes is largely dependent on photos provided by citizen scientists who happen to find them during their day-to-day activities outdoors. Your photographs are essential in determining the current range of all of our snakes. One of the best opportunities to see and document snakes is coming up. As the fall approaches and nighttime temperatures drop, snakes will get the message that it is time to move back to their denning locations. For some snakes this may be miles away, but for most northern snakes, this is only a few hundred yards. Often this requires crossing a road on their journey. To a snake, a road is essentially a warm and sunny ledge and they may linger there to raise their body temperatures. Sadly, this often results in a fatal encounter with a car. Still it is the ideal time to be searching roads for snakes both dead and alive, to help document their range. To see the migration and help document these species, pick a quiet section of road that travels between a sunny overgrown field or marsh edge and a rocky south or southwest facing rocky slope. On the first warm day after a fall frost, take a walk along this section of road to see if any snakes are crossing in that area. I used to take my two daughters to a snake crossing location near Snake Mountain every fall and we would help 30 to 40 snakes across the road in an hour or two. Even if you don't make it a special event, keep your eyes open for snakes

> whenever you are traveling roads (or just spending time outdoors) on warm fall days. If possible, take a photo of what you find, and either send it to me directly at jandrews@middlebury.edu, or through our website at VTHerpAtlas.org, and to the WildPaths Project. It would not only help us determine the current range of snakes in the interesting boundary region of the Cold Hollow to Canada Corridor but it would also help us locate critical road-crossing areas for these species.

Records in Vermont of *Lampropeltis triangulum* Milksnake



Current Record (1986 through 2010)

Historic Record (Prior to 1986)

Assumed Current Presence but no Verified Records

Record Documented with Photo, Specimen, or Recording

Local Sugarmakers Buy Conserved Land

By Nancy Patch, CHC Board Member

n the last issue of our newsletter we reported that the Atlas Timberlands Partnership properties owned together by the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and the Nature Conservancy (TNC) were selling most of their land to further fund forestland conservation throughout the state. The organizations intend to consider future ownership to meet the goals of the organizations. As a former member of the board of trustees I know that resident ownership is a high priority. In the last several months steps have been take to sell the Bakersfield holding of the Partnership to a local family with multiple generations working in the maple industry. CHC reached out to the Branon family to get some of their thoughts on this purchase and large acreage addition to their land base. The following is what Cecile Branon shared with us.

"The Branon Family Maple Orchards existence began in Fairfield VT. Since our beginnings we have grown from a 35K tap sugar bush to a 68K tap sugaring operation that includes a property located in the Cold Hollow Mountain Range of Bakersfield Vermont. As we have expanded in that area we have been able to double our production. This year in April we found out that a parcel of land of over 2000 acres was for sale by the Vermont Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy. This property is in short range of our boundary and was to be very beneficial to our expansion. We contacted the Brokerage firm and began the process of looking at all the aspects of the property. We worked very closely with Carl Powden from the Vermont Land Trust. Our offer was accepted by both parties and we have begun to put up the infrastructure needed for this year. This property will allow us to hopefully double the size of the operation that we currently have now. We have three sons that work with us so the expansion allows security for their future in Maple.

We had previously worked with the Vermont Land Trust and conserved over 600 acres in Fairfield many years ago as conservation was just taking off in our area. Transitioning this piece and working to follow the restrictions for this parcel have been very minuscule as many of the provisions are how we operate in our existing woods now.

We are very proud to work with both The Vermont Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy on this property. It is a dream come true for the family and a perfect fit for all of us."





CHARLIE HANCOCK

Vermont's Wild & Scenic Rivers

By Lindsey Wight, Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild & Scenic Committee



DAVID JUAIRE

In December 2014, Vermont joined the prestigious network of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System when a congressional action designated 46.1 miles of Vermont rivers Wild & Scenic. Local communities and the Vermont congressional delegation worked for years to study these river reaches and show that their value deserved to be recognized on a national scale. The Upper Missisquoi and the Trout Rivers now join other celebrated rivers which are preserved and safeguarded for their remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, and cultural values.

The National Wild & Scenic Rivers System was created in 1968 with the passing of the Wild & Scenic Act. The goal of this Act is to recognize and preserve rivers which have exceptional scenic and recreational value and to safeguard the special character of these rivers, while also recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. Our two rivers (the Upper Missisquoi and Trout) are Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers, which means that our rivers are managed through a partnership with the National Park Service, state government, and the eight communities that our designated rivers flow through. The designation empowers our communities along the rivers to protect these resources as best suits them.

The Upper Missisquoi and Trout Wild & Scenic Committee is formed of town appointees and partners who will help guide the future of these rivers, and will make decisions about how federal funds should be allocated to best maintain and improve the rivers according to the Management Plan. Our goal is to highlight, uphold, and enhance the quality and special features of these rivers and the access they provide, so that visitors and residents may fully enjoy our beautiful working landscape. Please join us at 7pm on September 29th at the Enosburg EMS building, when we host Bobby Farlice-Rubio,

 \angle



DAVID JUAIRE

an educator at the Fairbanks Museum who will present on the local Abenaki history and culture, and watch for other opportunities to learn and explore more about these wonderful rivers.

We are also pleased to announce that we have received our first round of the federal funding that comes with this designation! A portion of this funding is allocated to our small grants program; we will be inviting applications from our communities for these grant funds soon. Please reach out for more information about our small grants program, the Management Plan that guides our actions, other events that we will be hosting, how you can become involved as an appointee or partner, or if you have any questions about our rivers and this exciting designation. You can find us on facebook, on the web at <u>www.vtwsr.org</u>, or via email at info[at]vtwsr.org.



oldhollowtocanada.org

11

F A L L 2 0 1 6

Upcoming Events

Ties to the Land: Succession Planning Workshops

9 am – 3 pm

October 18th: Lyndon State College, 1001 College Road, Lyndonville. Deadline October 12th.

October 22nd: Three Stallion Inn, 665 Stock Farm Road, Randolph. Deadline October 14.

November 14: Inn at Willow Pond, 74 Will Pond Road, Manchester Center. Deadline November 7th.

Registration required, directions sent when registering. Cost: \$35, each additional family member \$20

Contact: Vermont Woodlands Association, 802-656-1721 or email <u>info@vermontwoodlands.org</u>

If you own and care for woodland, the fate of your land is probably important to you. You hope that future generations will benefit from your efforts. But hope is not a plan. Preserving your legacy requires planning, and that involves more than just having a will or an estate plan. This workshop is a mix of presentation and practical exercises that will give you the knowledge and tools to start succession planning. The fee includes morning coffee and lunch; plus one copy per family of Ties to the Land succession planning workbook and planning binder with worksheets.

WILD FOR WILDERNESS

Wednesday, October 19th, 7:00 pm

Location: Enosburg Falls Opera House, Depot Street Suggested donation \$10.00

Sponsored by: Enosburgh Conservation Commission & Cold Hollow to Canada

Join us for an evening with Sue Morse as she shares her world class photography in highlighting the need for wilderness and wild places in our landscape.

Meet Bat Biologist Alyssa Bennett

Thursday, October 20th, time TBD

Location: Richford Free event, donations appreciated to support future programming. Sponsored by: Richford & Montgomery Conservation Commissions Contact: Annette @ 933-2416 or at <u>richfordconservation@gmail.com</u>

Meet VT Fish and Wildlife Dept. Small Mammals Biologist Alyssa Bennett to learn about the condition of bats in Vermont and what individuals might be able to do to help nurture their populations. We will be offering some free bat houses to several lucky folks who attend the program!

CHC Annual Gathering with guest John Elder

Thursday, October 27th, 6 pm

Location: Montgomery Grange Hall, Montgomery RSVP requested, suggested donation of \$10 the evening of the event.

Contact: Bridget at <u>bridget@coldhollowtocanada.org</u>

Join us for an evening to celebrate Cold Hollow to Canada's accomplishments and our outlook for 2017. We'll enjoy a catered dinner together at the Montgomery Grange Hall and hear from our guest speaker, John Elder Middlebury College emeritus professor and author of Reading the Mountains of Home. Elder will share his thoughts on Vermont's forested landscape and the place we call home. Please visit our website to register for the event.

Animals of the North

January 19th, 7:00 pm Location: Montgomery Arts Center (intersection of RT 242 and RT 118) Montgomery Center VT

Suggested donation \$10.00

Sponsored by the Montgomery Conservation Commission and Cold Hollow to Canada

Join us for a spectacular journey to the North with Sue Morse's award winning photography and a discussion about how climate change is affecting our planet and it's wild animal inhabitants. Canada lynx, moose, American marten, caribou, polar bears, arctic fox and arctic marine and waterfowl ecology are some of the species and subjects covered in this stunningly beautiful show. Sue inspires, young and old alike, to join in the vital crusade to change our fossil fuel-burning ways, conserve natural resources and share a healthy planet with all that lives.

continued on page 13

Regional Conservation Commission Meetings

BAKERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the last Monday of every month at 1:00 PM in the Town Hall Building, 40 East Bakersfield Rd, Bakersfield.

ENOSBURGH CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the fourth Monday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Cold Hollow Career Center, 184 Missisquoi St., Enosburg Falls.

MONTGOMERY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the first Wednesday of the month from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the Public Safety Building/Library at 84 Mountain Road/Rt. 242, Montgomery Center.

RICHFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:00 PM in the upstairs conference room of the Arvin A. Brown Public Library, 88 Main St, Richford.

COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA STEERING COMMITTEE

Meets the third Monday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Cold Hollow Career Center in Enosburg Falls or Bakersfield Library. We rotate the location, so please let us know if you'll be joining us. It'd be great to see you there.

*Don't forget to check coldhollowtocanada.org for updated Upcoming Events

F A L L 2 0 1 6