

VERMONT MAPLE FESTIVAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The *St. Albans Messenger* presents the winners of the 2016 Vermont Maple Festival photography contest. Today's category: **SCENIC**



SECOND PLACE
Scenic
Alex Baldor, Richmond
'The Hidden Shack'



THIRD PLACE
Scenic
Ashley Callan, Fairfield
'Tator's Sugar Shack'



FIRST PLACE
Scenic
Ashley Callan, Fairfield
'When Night Calls'

In tomorrow's Messenger: See the winners in the **PEOPLE** category.



COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA: Why become a citizen scientist?

By **BRIDGET BUTLER**
Special to the Messenger

cit-i-zen sci-ence
noun
1. the collection and analysis of data relating to the natural world by members of the general public, typically as part of a collaborative project with professional scientists.

Simply put, citizen science is public participation in scientific research. It's a way for professional scientists or organizations to collect useful data using volunteers. I've often said that there can't be a biologist in everyone's backyard, but you can be that citizen scientist.

Everyone is capable of tapping into their scientific knowledge with a little guidance. In fact, when you were just a toddler you were most likely an incredible scientist! Maybe you intently watched a caterpillar eat a leaf, or counted the number of robins bouncing across your backyard, maybe you even sorted your acorn collection by size. These are all basic skills that build scientific knowledge: observing, counting, identifying, analyzing, and recording.

Citizen science taps into these basic skills and then matches them with two other components - a topic the public is or has potential to be passionate about and the need for data that can be collected by amateur scientists.

Ornithologists have become experts at using citizen scientists to meet research needs. They have tapped into the birding community and found a way to glean knowledge from content or data already of interest to birders. For example, one of the oldest citizen science projects in the world is the Christmas Bird Count, which happens mid-December through the first week of January. Each year, thousands of people across the United States participate by birding in a determined area for an entire day, counting every species of bird and individual that they come across. Birders love making lists of the birds they've seen and heard, and backyard birdwatcher track birds at their feeder; both are collect-



Photo courtesy CHC
Citizens scientists enter data.

ing very basic but very useful data. The Christmas Bird Count is now 115 years old and has given ornithologists an incredible historical view of winter birds across the country.

Cold Hollow to Canada oversees two citizen science projects in our region; the Keeping Track Monitoring Program and the WildPaths Program, which tracks animals crossing roads. Both these projects endeavor to understand where wildlife occur in our forested landscape and where/how they move from one habitat to another. We've tapped into the community's love for bears, moose, fisher and bobcat, as well as frogs, salamanders, snakes and turtles. We provide an opportunity for people to learn more about these animals and then contribute to our collective understanding of their habitat needs.

Becoming a citizen scientist fine tunes our ability to observe nature and deepens our connection to the land. For Cold Hollow to Canada, our citizen science projects help build community, awareness, knowledge and a collection of real data communities can use as stewards of this place we call home. For more information about how to volunteer for these projects visit: <http://bit.ly/CHCCitizenScience>

Twice per month, the Messenger will have updates on Cold Hollow to Canada's Citizen Science projects from CHC Program Director Bridget Butler.

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we challenge you to talk to the
women in your life and remind
them how important a yearly
mammogram really is.*



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