

Annual Members' Report

July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011



Director's Report

The past year was one with much to celebrate. At the 35th Wol's Nest summer camp reunion in August, campers, counselors, parents, and grandparents all returned to the Harris Center to play games, sing songs, and reminisce over picnic lunches. People came from as far away as Chicago and Atlanta. Whether they've gone on to professions related to the environment, have a love of the outdoors, or feel a particular bond with the Monadnock region — many commented on the powerful impact of Wol's Nest on their lives. The August reunion was followed by the Harris Center's 40th anniversary celebration at the October annual meeting. Eleanor Briggs spoke of the vision that created the Harris Center and her hopes for the future of the organization. She reminded us of the characteristics of her cat Harris, who "represented a certain wildness, humor, savvy and strong survival instinct, all elements needed for a successful environmental education center."

After 40 years, these same characteristics continue to form the core of our work. While our school programs are aligned with local and state curriculum standards and our land protection projects follow protocols set by the Land Trust Alliance, the strength of the work is found in our passion for wildness and wildlife. This passion is found in our educators as they help children and families connect with the wildness of the outdoors. It's in our volunteers as they lead outings to unique places in the region. It's here in our office staff when they welcome visitors, and it continues to be the driving force in our land protection efforts.

The following reports provide details on the past year's programs. It is the weaving together of these activities that provides opportunities for all ages to make connections to the natural world and sustains momentum for land protection. — Laurie Bryan



Thank you volunteers, one and all!

If one should ever wonder why and how we're able to do what we do at the Harris Center within budget and so successfully, the answer must especially focus on an incredible array of gifted and giving supporters — our volunteers.

From furniture building to grounds cleanup, from envelope stuffing to leading outings, from serving as dedicated trustees to providing office support, from trail monitoring to assisting at the annual solar car competition, from food to flowers — and in a seemingly infinite number of other ways — these volunteers make our mission successful through their selfless giving of time, energy, and more. How fortunate we are to have each and every one of them.

In the Schools

We read in the news about a growing body of research documenting young people's connection to nature. National studies report children spending more time on indoor activities than outdoor ones, and yet, when in nature, children report feeling peaceful, free, calm, happy, adventurous, alive, and curious. The Harris Center educators are here to support that connection!

During the 2010-2011 school year, Harris Center programs reached 2,400 kindergarten through 12th grade students in 27 Monadnock Region schools. Students walked along streams flowing into the Ashuelot River, experienced bird banding right outside their school in downtown Keene, traced their school water fountain to its source by following pipes to the reservoir, tracked and mapped winter mammal sign along the edges of their schoolyard, and began a vernal pool documentation process that they'll hand over to their town's conservation leaders.

We honored two exceptional eighth grade science teachers — Stacy Egan from Great Brook School, and Emily Wrubel from South Meadow School — as the Harris Center Environmental Educators of the Year. Stacy and Emily keep environmental science investigations alive all year long through monthly field work with their students at Otter Brook Farm in Peterborough. They collaborated with Harris Center naturalists, a professional ecologist, and the land manager on this long term study. In June, the eighth graders presented their field research projects to one another and to an adult audience at the Harris Center. Behind every well polished presentation, one could sense the devotion of Emily and Stacey, mentoring the next generation of ecologically literate young people.

Finally, we strengthened our continuum of teaching in the middle and high schools by dedicating a teaching position to that age group. We happily welcomed Laurel Swope to our team of environmental educators.



The Harris Center worked with the following schools during 2010/2011:

ConVal Regional School District

Antrim Elementary School
Pierce Elementary School
ConVal Regional High School
Dublin Consolidated School
Fracestown Elementary School
Great Brook Middle School
Greenfield Elementary School
Hancock Elementary School
Peterborough Elementary School
South Meadow Middle School
Temple Elementary School

SAU 29

Keene:
Benjamin Franklin School
Fuller School
Jonathan Daniels School
Keene High School
Symonds School
Wheelock School
Chesterfield Elementary School
Wells Memorial School
Marlborough Elementary School
Nelson Elementary School
Perkins Elementary School, Marlow

Jaffrey Rindge Cooperative School District

Conant High School
Jaffrey Grade School
Rindge Memorial School

Other School Districts

James M. Faulkner Elementary School, Stoddard
Sullivan Elementary School



Land Protection

Following last year's protection of Camp Marienfeld, this year brought another long-term goal on Silver Lake into reach — permanent protection of the large parcels once owned by Edgar Seaver. Thanks to many supporters around the lake in both Harrisville and Nelson, two of these large parcels were permanently protected by conservation easements held by the Harris Center. At the Harrisville end of the lake, a conservation easement on the historic Seaver Farm (first settled in 1767) was purchased in a bargain sale from long time owner Paul Geddes. This 33-acre easement protects a scenic meadow-topped drumlin leading down to the lake, as well as prime agricultural soil and more than 1,600 feet of frontage on pristine Seaver Reservoir. That purchase then enabled Mr. Geddes to donate a conservation easement on his Silver Lake frontage in Nelson at the north end of the lake. This easement protects 54 acres of forest habitat sloping down to

the parcel's 1,400 feet of scenic shore land which abuts the 116-acre Brantwood Camp, also protected by a Harris Center easement.

Turning to the Supersanctuary's east side, the highlight was receiving the largest conservation easement gift in the history of Peterborough — an easement that protects 470 acres of Otter Brook Farm in Happy Valley. The protected land includes 345 acres of working farm and forest as well as 125 acres designated as forever wild, where the Harris Center easement is backed up by the Northeast Wilderness Trust. Dr. Rick Van de Poll has conducted a natural resource inventory of the land to document its impressive diversity, which includes 20 wetland communities with 10 vernal pools. Otter Brook Farm is a prime example of how our land conservation and conservation education activities can overlap. For the fourth year in a row, Dr. Van de Poll and our teacher-naturalists worked with classroom science teachers from Great Brook and South Meadow Schools to practice ecological research in the farm's varied ecosystems.

Programs and Outings

Over the past year, we offered 108 programs and outings — at no charge and open to the public. Outings included full moon hikes, kayak paddles, and treks to unique locations throughout the region. The majority of these events were led by volunteers, sharing their love of the outdoors with others. In addition to outdoor events, we hosted a variety of programs including book signings, an apple tasting, workshops for landowners and easement monitors, and presentations by those who had explored Prince Edward Island by bicycle, completed a through-hike on the Appalachian Trail, and one who reached the summit of Mount Everest.



While the Harris Center provides the location and support for these events, we frequently have cosponsors. This year these partners included: NH Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, Society for Protection of NH Forests, Monadnock Conservancy, Slow Food Monadnock, Monadnock Chapter of Trout Unlimited, UNH Cooperative Extension, Hancock Library, Friends of Pisgah, Antioch University New England and Hannah Grimes Marketplace. Thanks to all who volunteer and collaborate to make these events available to the public.

Outreach Programs

The 2010-2011 year was outstanding for Outreach Programs at the Harris Center. Since 2002, the Harris Center's Outreach Program base has continued to grow steadily. From toddler and preschool programs, private schools to public schools, and Girl Scout events to programs designed for whole families and adults, the scope of educational opportunities continues to grow.

Outreach at the Harris Center provides opportunities for people of all ages to connect with the natural world. From programs like after-school fort building to hikes for families and middle school students doing real field science, we're engaging participants in active learning in the outdoors.

Over 1,500 people participated in Outreach Programs with the Harris Center this year. The Environmental Studies Institute (ESI) offered courses for adults such as the ecology and biology of New Hampshire's turtles and insects in the field and garden. Families with children of all ages participated in naturalist-led full moon hikes each season, while preschool and elementary age students spent days as chipmunks, built forts, honed map and compass skills, and explored the nooks and crannies around the Harris Center.

Middle school students from three local school districts designed, built and raced model sized solar cars at the Harris Center-facilitated Monadnock Region 4th annual Junior Solar Sprint race. Over 100 students participated in this *sizzling* event and many local businesses and volunteers donated their time, money, and services to make this program downright *electric*!



Summer Camp

Another summer of fun and exploration brought 145 new and returning Wol's Nest campers to the Harris Center. This year the program offered two themes. Children attending the "Under One Sky" sessions enjoyed camping out under the stars and learning about the natural world close by, as well as the wonders that lie beyond. Campers attending the "Wild about the Wilderness" sessions were found exploring nature trails and habitats around the Harris Center. Insect collecting, nature walks, and pond and cave exploration were a few of the kid favorites.

Wee Wols camp for preschool-and kindergarten-age children engaged 24 youngsters in explorations of the Harris Center grounds. While the youngest were combing nearby meadows and wetlands, 24 middle school students participated in the Voyagers and Spoonwood Adventure camps — hiking nearby mountains, strengthening their paddling skills, and (for the Spoonwood Adventurers) camping on Spoonwood Pond for four nights. It was a fabulous summer and we look forward to seeing both new and familiar faces when the days lengthen the and sun warms us again!

Citizen Science

This is Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory (AVEO)'s inaugural year as the citizen science arm of the Harris Center, and we're off to a beautiful beginning!

In March and April, 120+ volunteers participated in our **Salamander Crossing Brigades** program, which aims to protect local amphibian populations by training volunteers to identify, count, and safely move salamanders and frogs across local roads during the spring amphibian migration. Several volunteers saw spotted salamanders for the very first time, including one mother-daughter team who wrote: "It was a moment we'll never forget! We can't begin to thank you." We also trained and corresponded with several grassroots conservation leaders from other parts of the northeast, who studied our program in order to initiate similar projects in their own backyards.

One of our trainees wrote to tell us that she "left feeling very inspired . . . I'm now spearheading the salamander movement in Connecticut." An aspiring Salamander Brigade Coordinator from Long Island, NY, said: "Thanks for all your work with Big Night organization. You've really helped pave the way for me." Even though the timing of this year's spring rains led to smaller-than-usual Big Nights in the Monadnock region, we're counting this year's Salamander Brigades a success!

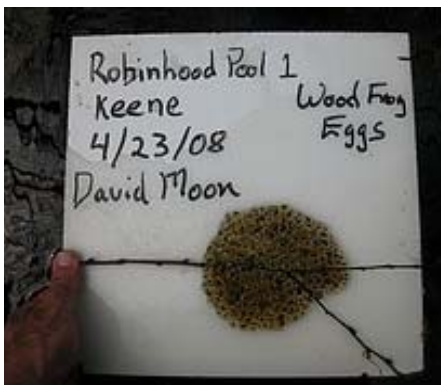


Sigrid Scholz

This spring, our citizen scientists also searched for and documented vernal pools – which serve as specialized breeding habitat for those migrating amphibians – as part of our **Keene Vernal Pool Project**. Data for all 28 vernal pools documented on public and conserved land in Keene has been shared with the Keene Conservation Commission, and can be viewed via a new interactive online map at www.aveo.org.

This summer, we worked with New Hampshire Audubon to coordinate a one-time **volunteer survey of the state-endangered Common Nighthawk** in Keene. We also continue to work with Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, New Hampshire Fish & Game, and Antioch University New England to plan several **stream connectivity restoration** projects, aimed at improving brook trout habitat and informed by stream crossing surveys conducted by AVEO citizen scientists in 2006 and 2008.

Along the way, we also moved into a new office at Keene State College, where we're working with undergraduate students on local conservation research and strengthening the connections between the College, the Harris Center, and the community. We'll be back on the salamander and vernal pool beat in 2012, and we've got a few more citizen science projects up our sleeves, so stay tuned!



David Moon



Larry Antonuk



Tim Garceau

Financial Report: Operating Budget—July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011

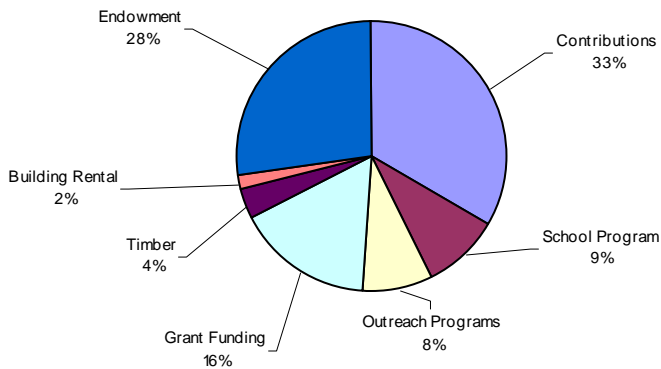
Income

Contributions	\$	198,512	33%
School Program	\$	55,050	9%
Outreach Programs	\$	49,964	8%
Grant Funding	\$	97,925	16%
Timber	\$	21,294	4%
Building Rental	\$	10,118	2%
Endowment	\$	165,000	28%
Total	\$	597,863	100%

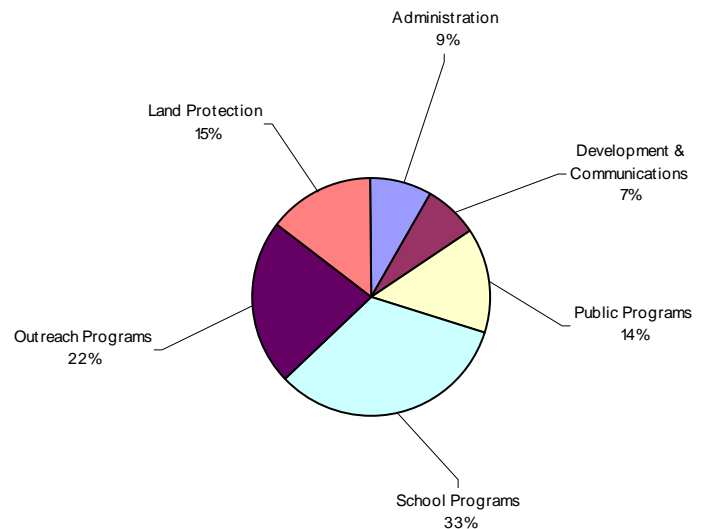
Expenses

Public Programs	\$	81,928	14%
School Programs	\$	191,212	33%
Outreach Programs	\$	131,429	22%
Land Protection	\$	86,566	15%
Development & Communications	\$	43,166	7%
Administration	\$	50,094	9%
Total	\$	584,395	100%

Income



Expenses FY 2011



The financial statements of the Harris Center for Conservation Education are reviewed by Thomas S. Bates, Certified Public Accountant, P.C. of Keene, NH. The reviewed financial statements are available for public view at the Harris Center office in Hancock, NH.

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