

Jericho Underhill Land Trust Annual Meeting
May 3, 2021

Board members present: Sabina Ernst, Michael Lazorchak, Phyl Newbeck, Livy Strong, and Hilaire Thomas

Guest speaker: Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester

Others present: Jessica Alexander, Peter and Caroline Bennett, Barbara and Bruce Blokland, Jack and Caroline Cameron, Charles Cyr, Diana Dunn, Barb Frankowski, Dave Ganter, Mary Garrity, Sheila Halpin, Paul Hansen, Richard Hotchkin, Jeff Hulstrung, Deb Lane, Francine and Michael Mellott, Greg Mikkelson, Catherine McMains, Jim Morris and Pat Spellman-Morris, Louanne Neilsen, Grace Nelson, Donna Pratt, Niels Rinehart, Margaret Rushlow, Peter Saile, Erik Sandberg, Bob and Gail Schermer, Martha Sheehy, Dan and Jan Steinbauer, Joan Swan, Michele Tulis, Liz Upton, Thomas Vogelsang, Joanna Weinstock, William Wilson, and Jon Zimmerman

1. Welcome and board member Introductions.

Livy Strong welcomed JULT members and introduced the current board. Sabina Ernst, Michael Lazorchak, Vice President and head of our Stewardship Committee John Koier who was unable to attend, Treasurer Hilaire Thomas and Secretary Phyl Newbeck. Livy also recognized the work of Diana Dunn who is working diligently to increase our membership and is responsible for our enhanced social media presence including our new Instagram account, Kurt Goggin, Avery MacDonald and new intern, Carly Mangan.

2. Celebrating land conservation in Jericho and Underhill

We recently conserved the Tomasi Meadow which abuts Casey's Hill. It is now owned by the town of Underhill. We are working on the conservation of Mobbs Farm which is currently owned by the town of Jericho and has a variety of recreational trails. We have already raised \$23,000, \$13,000 of which was from a very generous donor. VLT and JULT have contributed \$10,000 and we are asking for \$10,000 from the Jericho Conservation Reserve Fund.

We are working to preserve the Charron Pasture which abuts Mills Riverside Park. The pasture is the foreground to Mills Riverside Park. We are also talking to two land owners of active farms: one in Jericho and one in Underhill. Our only revenue comes from our members.

3. Financial Report

Hilaire provided the financial report. As of the first of the year, we had \$202,000 in various accounts and fixed assets consisting of Kikas Valley Farm and Wolfrun Natural Area which are worth approximately one million dollars although neither property has been appraised recently. Hilaire noted that we had a net negative balance of \$31,000 for 2020 but that's because we raised money for Tomasi Meadow in 2019 but spent the money in 2020.

4. **Land Stewardship Report**

John Koier submitted a report prior to the meeting which Livy read: JULT currently owns, pays taxes and manages almost 800 acres of land in the towns of Jericho, Richmond and Bolton. Here are some of the recent management highlights.

Kikas Valley Farm has a new consulting forester and an updated Forestry Management Plan. We have retained Michael Brown of Birdseye Consulting. In conjunction with Audubon Vermont, he has incorporated some bird-friendly practices into our new forestry management plan and we are excited about this. Earlier last fall, Allaire Diamond of VLT helped a few volunteers set up an emerald ash borer monitoring site on the KVF uplands. We have ongoing invasive plant removal work dealing with infestations of Japanese barberry, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose. We are still working on boundary marking on the recently acquired 70-acre addition to this property. Finally, we are getting some expert help with stream/erosion management practices in the riparian area surrounding the farm fields leased by Paul Mazza.

Wolfrun/Gateway had the return of beaver to Moose Pond which was exciting and became even more exciting when they dammed up the culvert under the ancient “land bridge,” our only access to the northern section of this property. Thankfully, Chris Wells was able to bring over his backhoe and unplug the culvert. There has been some cleaning up of the old junkyard on the property that abuts the northern Wolfrun entrance and we are super glad to have this hazardous eyesore, which has stymied us for years, being dealt with.

5. **Board nominations (Livy Strong, Phyl Newbeck, John Koier, Sabina Ernst, Michael Lazorchak)**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the five board members were reelected to three-year terms.

6. **Upcoming events**

Upcoming events include an evening bird slideshow on May 6, and our annual bird walk on May 8 at 7 a.m. with Evergreen Erb and Sabina Ernst. This will be Evergreen’s 23rd bird walk and we are gratified that she continues to lead these walks even though she now lives in Huntington. She and Diana Dunn have created a bird guide to help with the walk and we will sell prints of the guide. One more event will be a May 15 spring wildflower walk with Michele Tulis.

JULT recently started a committee to further publicize our work. We’re trying to figure out a way to connect the users of our properties to our history and to perhaps become members. We’ve added some extra tools including enhanced email communications and Instagram. Our Instagram account reaches almost 200 members and over 100 others who use our properties. Please let us know if you have additional ideas to help us reach out or if you’re interested in volunteering.

7. **Thank you.**

JULT could not do the work we do without membership donations which constitute our only revenue and allow us to do our important land conservation work.

Livy introduced Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper, our guest speaker, who spoke about forests in Vermont.

Here is the link to his presentation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/VGOVrDWhL5REr86OMcmrfTCLaAMcgWwgiCFm1NTTLwr99KZIYDzHtgzyE5BEB4pa.aQd7ALLprESOht5G> Passcode: m9Cfc@7X