



LAND TRUST NEWS

Preserving Open Lands In Our Towns

Winter 2015



MOOSE POND AT WOLFRUN NATURAL AREA PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN KOIER

THE QUIET DAYS OF WINTER...

We are in the quiet days of winter. Heavy snow muffles most sounds and slows activity. Just leaving the house requires a coat, hat, boots and gloves. Surrounded by cloth protection, we venture out into the frozen landscape. We find bare trees softened by plumes of white, ice-encrusted streams, bright blue skies and brittle cold. Every snowfall creates a new world for us to explore and experience adventure. Familiar landmarks have disappeared, buried beneath a fresh cover of white. On snowshoe, cross-country ski or simply walking, we embrace this quiet time and celebrate the beauty of winter. How fortunate we are to live in a community where winter exploration is at our door.



We're on the web: www.jult.org

Remember to "Like" us on



LOST BOUNDARY FOUND!

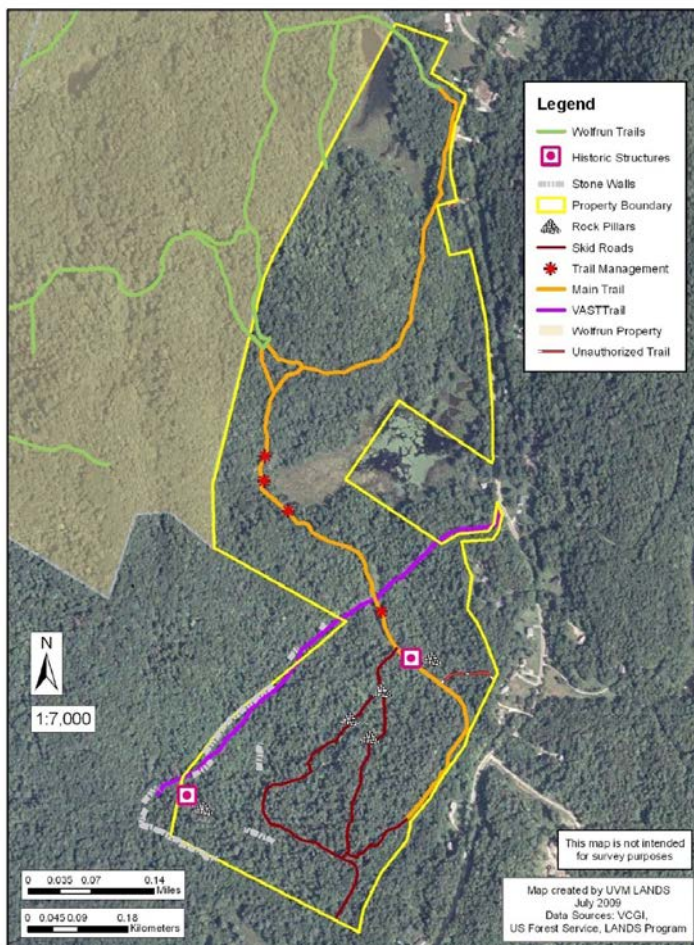
ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JOHN SCHROEDER

Although the Jericho Underhill Land Trust enjoys a federal non-profit tax status, the board of directors made a decision early on to keep our properties on the local tax rolls. The Gateway property is no exception. Gateway, purchased and conserved by JULT in 2009, encompasses 123 acres and is adjacent to JULT's 279 acre Wolfrun property. Like Wolfrun, the Gateway parcel consists of diverse wildlife habitat and in addition there are several fascinating sites from farms and homes of the past. These include foundations, wells and extensive stone-walls. (see jult.org for more information)



Gateway is enrolled in the Vermont Land Use program (current use) and an approved forestry plan is required to maintain status in this program. The plan calls for some clearing to be done over the fall winter and spring and

Gateway Property-Trails and Historic Structures



The Gateway Property map shows the Gateway boundary as well as hiking trails and historic features.

as the forester cruised the land to establish which areas would be most appropriate for this work, he had some difficulty determining the property boundary in one section—mostly a wetland area of about 10 acres. Two board members, John Koier (land stewardship chair) and John Schroeder, searched for the markings that would determine the boundary being questioned but were unable to find it.



A survey team from Button Professional Land Surveyors was hired to determine and mark the border. One corner of the property leaves Stage Road and follows a portion of the

VAST trail. Before long, the border turns abruptly northwest, then northeast and then southeast. These turns are all at right angles and enclose a large wetland/beaver pond and house site before returning to Stage Road. (See the Gateway Property-Trails and Historic Structures map. The site is the area marked off as a yellow bordered rectangle about in the middle of the image.)

The survey included research, investigation, reconnaissance and field survey to retrace the boundary. Other procedures included collection of field data, measurements, interviews with neighbors, reading other surveyor's files and data from town records. Corner markers are set and





a recordable plat survey prepared. The team had challenges, especially because the wetland was larger and deeper now than when the border was originally laid out. Kayaks had to be used. One corner to be marked was under 6 feet of water!

However, all that remains to be done now is for a volunteer JULT crew to blaze the newly traced border (the above waterline portion anyway). The forester can then return to finish marking the areas to be thinned later in the winter and spring by the cutting crew.

Accompanying photos show the wetland, beaver lodge, board members John S. and John K., almost downed tree, water filled moose print and beaver dam.

Membership Matters

JULT wishes to thank our many members that have renewed this year. Your support allows us to focus on land conservation and land stewardship within our community.

Thank you!



POSSIBLE CHANGES TO STATE CURRENT USE

The Vermont state current use tax program has been an excellent tool for landowners who wish to keep their land undeveloped and in forestry or agriculture. By actively managing their land, landowners enjoy reduced taxes. Towns are reimbursed by the state for lost tax revenue. The contract is for ten years and there are financial penalties for pulling out of the program prematurely.

A new proposal by Governor Shumlin includes a three-year moratorium on new enrollments to the current use tax program. According to the tax department, a moratorium with other changes would generate \$1.6 million in savings for fiscal 2016. Since the state is experiencing a \$93 million budget shortfall for fiscal 2016, the pressure to find savings is significant. That being said, JULT is steadfastly opposed to any measures that negatively impact Vermont farms and forests and make keeping land undeveloped even more difficult. Complicating matters in the Town of Jericho, landowners will no longer have a Town Land Stabilization Contract to enroll in by 2016 as an alternative. This leaves many landowners of large parcels facing some hard financial decisions about their property. Our rural landscape cannot be taken for granted as the pressure to develop intensifies. More houses slice the open land, reduce recreational opportunities, deaden scenic vistas, and add cost to town services. This is not the direction to take.

JULT WILL BE SPEAKING ON MARCH 22

JULT will be speaking on March 22 at the Community Center in Jericho Center. Here is the full program.

VILLAGE UNIVERSITY, MARCH-APRIL, 2015
 "THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF JERICHO"

The Town of Jericho is committed to its natural setting, as reflected in the Town Plan where the first stated goal is "To protect the natural environment" (Town of Jericho, Comprehensive Town Plan, Adopted February 17, 2011; p. 1).

There are several organizations operating within Jericho that focus on land conservation, protection, preservation, and management of natural resources. In the spring of 2015, the Jericho Conservation Commission and the Jericho Community Center will co-host a session of the Village University to highlight the work of these organizations their projects and accomplishments.

These groups will participate:

1. Jericho Conservation Commission
2. Jericho Energy Task Force
3. Friends of the Winooski River
4. Mobbs Committee
5. Jericho Trails Committee
6. Jericho Underhill Land Trust

The Village University was originally established by the Community Center as informal lectures and demonstrations by residents of Jericho, who have a wealth of expertise in many different fields, to share with other residents.



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Membership Matters

Livy Strong
Chair

John Koier
Vice Chair

Phyl Newbeck
Secretary

Hilaire Thomas
Treasurer

John Schroeder
Publications

Help protect our future landscape...TODAY

Please note: All JULT memberships now run on a calendar year from January 1st to December 31st.

Please sign me up for:

- Conservator** membership \$500
- Steward** membership \$100
- Sponsor** membership \$50
- Family** membership \$35
- Individual** membership \$25
- Student/Senior** membership \$10
- Lifetime** membership \$1,000

(Beat inflation and avoid renewal notices!)

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Please make **checks** payable to **JULT** and mail to the address below. Or you may **pay by credit card via our website: www.jult.org**. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Other considerations:

- My employer's matching gift is enclosed.
- Please **do not** send me a "thank-you" gift.
- I wish to remain anonymous.

Please contact me regarding:

- Conservation options for my land
- Making a gift of stock
- Including JULT in my will
- Other planned giving opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities:
 - ___ Fundraising/Events
 - ___ Office/Administration
 - ___ Trails/Land Stewardship



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