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*Membership Matters!*



# LAND TRUST NEWS

Preserving Open Lands In Our Towns

**Winter Newsletter 2024**

## The Davis Farm CONSERVED!

Tammy and Gary Davis have made the heroic effort to conserve the bulk of their farm property. This work began a few years ago and their perseverance ensures that 180 scenic acres will remain in agriculture, in perpetuity. The conservation of this land enhances their organic dairy business and promises a farming future. Jericho has lost most of its agricultural heritage and it is a true cause for celebration to count the Davis Farm as remaining and contributing to our rural enterprise.

Besides the commitment of Gary and Tammy, JULT wants to thank the many donors who contributed to this conservation work. With your support, we raised \$55,000 and aided in

the cost of two appraisals. The Vermont Land Trust helped to guide this lengthy process and secure additional funding from The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and federal funding through the USDA. The Town of Jericho contributed \$35,000 from its Conservation Reserve Fund. The Davis family assisted by receiving 10 percent less than the full value which is known as a bargain sale.

Land conservation is often a community project and protecting the Davis Farm demonstrates this. Nevertheless, without Tammy and Gary's desire to see their land remain intact and productive, this would not have happened.

## 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!)

### 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
- ☐ Other planned giving opportunities
- ☐ Volunteer opportunities:
  - \_\_\_ Fundraising/Events
  - \_\_\_ Office/Administration
  - \_\_\_ Trails/Land Stewardship

### Legacy Planning:

Please consider JULT gifts that might include a bequest or charitable income gift. Ask an attorney or estate planner about your options.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.jult.org).  
All contributions are tax-deductible.

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[www.facebook.com/Jericho-Underhill-Land-Trust](http://www.facebook.com/Jericho-Underhill-Land-Trust)

## Winter Thoughts

Winter brings us brittle cold days, bright blue skies, and sparkling sunshine. Snow softens the contours of the land and gives us sliding, skiing, and more outdoor fun. Ice glistens bright; clean and clear. How fortunate we are to live in this magical, frozen wonderland. The Jericho Underhill Land Trust is pleased to have permanently conserved some of these very special places for winter enjoyment. We look forward to an exciting new year of accomplishments in 2024!



The Riverside Meadow at daybreak.

Photo credit: Kyle Seymour



**We're on the web: [www.jult.org](http://www.jult.org)**

**Remember to "Like" us on**



## Tomasi Meadow.... Remembered

*A letter written by Madeleine Albert Berenson*

Dear JULT,

In 1969, when I was ten years old, my family moved into the old stone house on Pleasant Valley Road and lived there for two years. My father worked for IBM in Essex Junction, and there were six of us kids then—two more would be born after he was transferred to the plant in San Jose, where we moved in the spring of 1971.

I have so many fond memories of the short time we lived in Vermont. It was not only a magical interlude in my childhood, it was a formative one that shaped my life in unexpected ways. It was where I learned to ski, and where my wonder and respect for the beauty and balance of nature was sparked.

I hadn't been back to Vermont for over five decades, and when my husband and I recently planned a visit to his mother (who is 88 years old, was recently widowed, and lives in northern Massachusetts in an independent living facility), we planned a road trip with her to get her out of her apartment and have an adventure. We decided to stay in Stowe and take a morning trip to Underhill to see my old house. I asked if they would indulge me in a literal "walk down memory lane" that I wanted to take, from the house to Underhill Central School, and they said they were happy to.

I was a chubby pre-teen, and my mother encouraged me to walk home from school when the weather permitted, to, you know, trim down. I loved the solitude of the walk and especially loved the section of green fields on the right-hand side of the road, especially when the tall grass was blowing in the wind. I know it's kind of silly, but please imagine a slightly chubby ten-year-old girl with a lot of little brothers and sisters who were new to the school and didn't fit in, looking at the beautiful tall grasses swaying in mesmerizing, zen-like patterns, and feeling at peace. I used to chant a little rhyme in my head as I walked past them, over and over again:

Fields of hay  
Hills of hay  
Fields and hills of hay.

Memories can be unreliable, and I after all the new houses and fast traffic I'd witnessed along the way, I started to worry that I was in for some serious field-related disappointment. This is why I can't tell you how happy I was when I came upon them and saw they are exactly as they've lived in my memories. And when I saw the sign that they are protected forever, and later learned that they hold the Tomasi name, it brought me great joy.

My experiences are definitely of a bygone era. But the unspoiled beauty of the Tomasi Meadow is timeless. It offers refuge, respite, and inspiration for children of every era, where they will have their own formative experiences and make their own memories, each in their own way. And that makes me very, very happy to know.

I am so grateful to your organization for what you've done to preserve that essential swath of nature.

Sincerely,  
Madeleine Albert Berenson

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

THANK YOU! Without your membership support and donations towards our conservation projects, your local land trust would simply not exist. We depend entirely on your generosity and willingness to invest in our community's cherished landscape for today and tomorrow. Thousands of acres have been conserved within the last 35 years and JULT is poised to continue our efforts. So, we THANK YOU for your continued support as we look to the future, together.

## Black Bears and Our Community

*by Sabina Ernst*

The Jericho Underhill Land Trust and our members understand that land conservation is crucial for the survival of large mammals including black bears. Black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are omnivorous animals that require large areas of land to thrive. When we conserve large parcels of unfragmented forest land we help preserve their habitats and ensure that they have enough space to roam and forage for food. We also help maintain the ecological balance of an area, which is essential for the survival of other species that depend on the same habitat.

However, land conservation alone is not enough to protect black bears. At our Annual Meeting in October, we were fortunate to hear from Jaclyn Comeau, Black Bear biologist for Vermont Fish and Wildlife. Jaclyn advised us that human behavior modification is necessary to ensure that bears are not negatively impacted. We learned that human activities can lead to conflicts between humans and bears, which can result in the death of bears. Bears, generalist omnivores with a keen sense of smell (several 1000 times more sensitive than humans), often find their way to our yards



Black bear tracks at Kikas Valley Farm Photo Credit: Sabina Ernst

because of our carelessness and once they learn that a location has a food source they do not forget. The Fish and Wildlife Department uses the adage "A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear" to remind us of the consequences of complacency.

Jaclyn gave examples of the top human sources that lead bears to venture closer to our homes: pet food, bird feeders, barbecue grills, garbage, and household trash containers.

More specifically, she gave us stats for bear reports to Fish and Wildlife from Jericho and Underhill which showed that in Jericho, of 96 bear incidents reported between 2011-23, 35% were related to garbage and 17% were chicken-related. In Underhill, for 86 bear reports in the same time period, 22% were related to garbage, and 35% were chicken-related.

As Jericho Underhill Land Trust supporters and responsible wildlife stewards, we need to:

- Keep chickens and honeybees secure within an electric fence or other bear-proof enclosure.
- Never feed bears, deliberately or accidentally.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Feed birds from December to March only. (Winter Solstice to Vernal Equinox) - and consider adding landscape plants that provide natural food sources, such as berries and seeds, for birds instead of using feeders.
- Store trash in a secure place. Trash cans alone are not enough!

Land conservation is essential for the survival of black bears. However, it is equally important to modify our human behaviors to ensure that bears are not negatively impacted. By working together to conserve land and modify our behaviors, we can help to protect black bears and ensure that they continue to play a vital role in maintaining the balance of nature. To read more and find resources for living responsibly in bear country please visit: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/living-with-black-bears>;

[www.bearwise.org](http://www.bearwise.org)