



**CHAMPLAIN AREA TRAILS**

**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**



# JOIN OUR CREW IN 2022!

## JUNE

### National Trails Day

Hike Black Kettle and Spirit  
Sanctuary Trails to honor Eddy  
Foundation and Lakeside School  
Essex, NY

### West Valley Trail Opening

Lewis, NY

## JULY

### Summer Hike

Trembleau Mountain,  
including a swim at Port Kent  
Après-hike social:  
Ausable Brewing Company  
Keesville, NY

## AUGUST

### Mushroom Hike (\$)

Black Kettle Trail  
Essex, NY

## SEPTEMBER

### Late Summer

### Wildflowers Hike (\$)

Riverside Trail  
Willsboro, NY

### Adirondack Harvest Festival Hike

Westport, NY

### Mushroom Hike (\$)

Black Kettle Trail  
Essex, NY

## OCTOBER

### Autumn Colors Series

**Rattlesnake Mountain**  
Willsboro, NY

**N. Boquet Summit Trail**  
Essex, NY

**Broughton Ledges Trail**  
Moriah, NY

**West Valley Trail**  
Lewis, NY

## NOVEMBER

### Owl Prowl

Bobcat Trail  
Essex, NY

## DECEMBER

### Winter Hike

Ausable Marsh  
Après-hike social:  
Livin' Goods Brewery  
Peru, NY

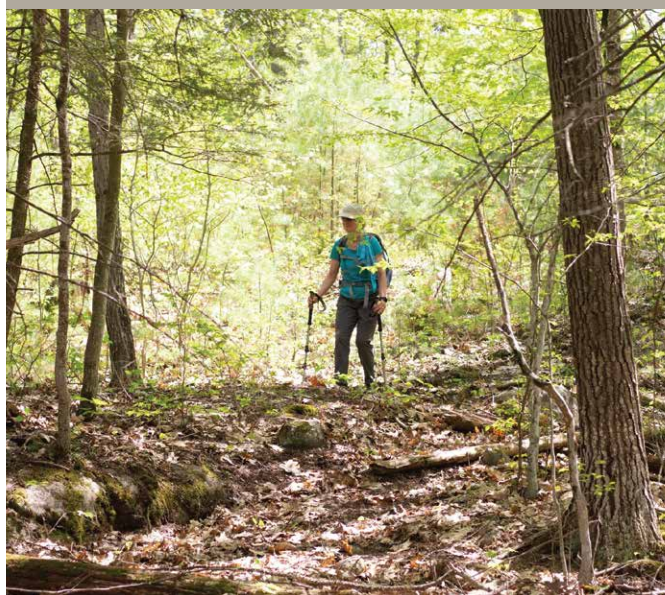
Dates and times are  
subject to change.

(\$) **Registration Fee.**



## Mission

Champlain Area Trails saves land, makes trails, connects people with nature, and promotes economic vitality in New York's Champlain Valley.



## Vision

Through our trails, lands, hikes, and outdoor educational settings, the Champlain Valley is a place where communities, people, and businesses thrive, and everyone enjoys the benefits from outdoor recreation and tourism.

To register or learn more, visit us at  
[champlainareatrails.com](http://champlainareatrails.com)

# Dear Friends of Champlain Area Trails,

**“Connecting people with nature” is a key part of our mission to make trails and save land. This year we’ve been hearing how CATS trails connect people to people. And that’s great because connectivity is what CATS is all about.**

Our mission highlights creating “trails that link communities.” This is the basis for our annual Grand Hike, and our long-term vision of making town-to-town trails around Lake Champlain, which is best captured in the phrase “Hike the Lake” you see on the poster created by Oscar-nominated filmmaker and resident, Aaron Woolf.

So along with people telling us how much they enjoy CATS trails, they also expressed their appreciation for how they can connect with friends, families, and people on the trails.

Thank you for making all this possible. Yes, your support helped make 67 miles of new trails that take people to wonderful overlooks, through diverse forests, along quiet streams, across lush fields, and into our towns. Your support also brings people and communities together.

All this adds up to “seriously fun conservation.” Looking back at 2021, here are some examples of the fun you made happen:

- CATS opened **5 new trails** – including the Essex Quarry Nature Preserve!
- CATS volunteers **donated over 560 hours!**
- CATS hosted over **30 hikes and outdoor educational events!**
- The newly created **CATSWomen** hiking group brought in **51 new female hikers.**
- The town-to-town route shown on the CATS Trail map inspired residents Mary McGowen and Peter Helmeteg to walk **57 miles** from Port Kent to Ticonderoga.
- CATS hosted a hike at the newly renamed **“Mt. Inez”** in Lewis, NY to celebrate the Women’s Suffrage Centennial.

We have many exciting projects lined up for this year in New York’s Champlain Valley, including saving the iconic **Coot Hill in Moriah to secure its popular trail**, holding a grand opening hike at the West Valley Trail in Lewis, and making our first trail in Clinton County.

As you read this report, please take great pride in knowing the tremendous impact you have had on people, community, and nature, now and for generations to come. Thank you.



Happy Trails,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Maron".

Chris Maron  
Executive Director

**PHOTO CREDITS:  
Brendan Wiltse Photography,  
Pine Tree Imagery,  
and various volunteer  
photographers**

# CATS Saves Land

## Essex Quarry Nature Preserve



**There are 35 unique ecological and historical acres in Essex, New York,** that surround an ancient limestone rock quarry, and are home to 450-million-year-old fossils that were once part of the world's oldest coral reef. Thanks to broad community financial support and after two years in the making, CATS

opened the Essex Quarry Nature Preserve in September 2021. The Essex Quarry Nature Preserve is located on the south edge of the hamlet, just a short distance from the Lake Champlain Ferry's Essex/Charlotte, VT landing.

This land began operating as a quarry in the 1800s, with stone from the quarry being used to build landmarks like the Brooklyn Bridge and the state capitol building in Albany.

Today, the site showcases a combination of natural, geological, paleontological, and historic features. The eastern part of the property features a rare Limestone Woodland natural community. It occurs on shallow soil above limestone bedrock and, while it occurs extensively along Lake Champlain, it is rare on the planet.

The swirled fossils you see in the quarry's Bluestone are from 460-million-year-old marine snails named *Maclurotes Magnus*. When the Champlain Bluestone was formed,

present-day New York formed the eastern shoreline of what is now North America. Because of this, New York's shoreline was part of the oldest coral reef on Earth, which stretched down to what is now Tennessee.

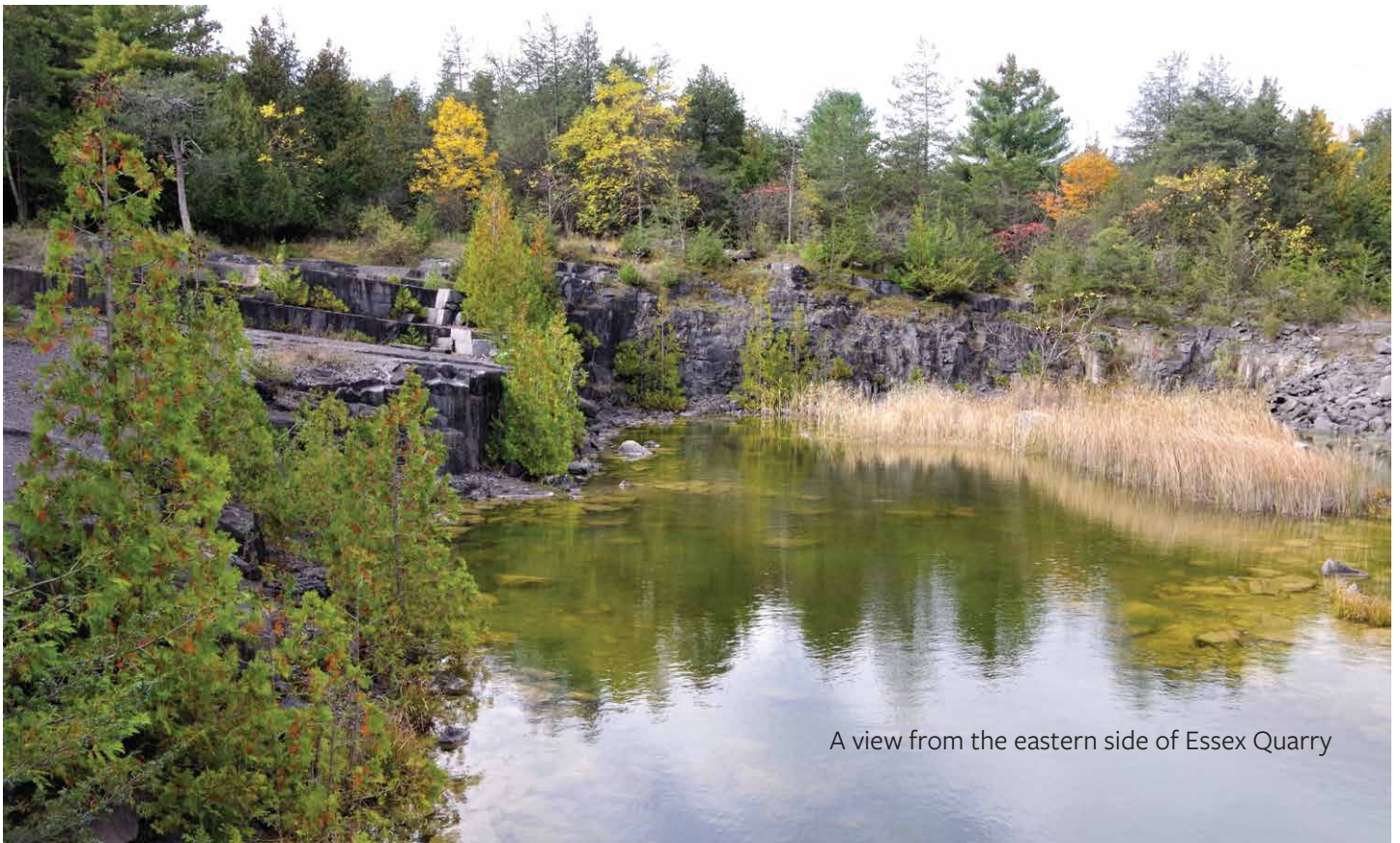
"The great thing about Essex Quarry Nature Preserve is that it's right on Essex's main street," said Chris Maron, CATS Executive Director, "People are already taking the ferry over from Vermont and walking through Essex to the quarry. Along the way, they admire the beautiful town, shop at local businesses, and see the buildings made from quarry stone."

Staff and volunteers constructed over a mile of trails throughout the quarry, both for walking and cross-country skiing. They installed an informational kiosk along with a series of interpretive signs.

"The CATS staff and board, and many wonderful volunteers assisted us in helping to make Essex Quarry a spectacular place to enjoy," said CATS Board Chair, Dan Keegan. "We're so happy that we had the opportunity to preserve it, thanks to generous supporters."

This preserve does have it all: rich history, a unique natural community, and now - trails! We hope people will enjoy it to the fullest.

**The swirled fossils you see in the quarry's Bluestone are from 460-million-year-old marine snails...**



A view from the eastern side of Essex Quarry



A scene from the Broughton Ledges Trail in Moriah

# CATS Makes Trails

## Broughton Ledges

**Yellow leaves sparkled along the rocky ledges** as fifteen people hiked up a series of switchbacks for almost two miles to a more level loop trail that showcased the cliffs that are known as “Broughton Ledges.” As they walked along the old woods road, they passed through a beautiful forest with cliffs, large rocks, flowing streams, and discreet views.

CATS presented these natural moments for people to enjoy in the grand opening of the Broughton Ledges Trail in Moriah, New York in October 2021. Since then, it has already proven to be a popular place for hikers seeking a more challenging CATS trail.

Executive Director, Chris Maron, describes Broughton Ledges as more “primitive” than the typical CATS trail, in that it plies the backcountry more deeply and is longer and more rugged. The 6-mile hike resembles a balloon – the string leads to an oval loop, and on completion of the loop, the hiker returns to the road by way of the string.

**“We were so pleased to finally open this trail”**

From the trailhead, Broughton Ledges crosses a small stream and then proceeds along the base of a mossy little cliff, from which water prodigiously drips as if from a sodden sponge. When the old logging road begins its steep climb, the CATS trail breaks off and goes up the ridge with a series of short, surgical switchbacks and a small set of stairs to a point that guidebooks poetically describe as “a height of land.”

“We were so pleased to finally open this trail,” Maron exclaimed. “The Eddy Foundation, which owns the property to conserve the wildlife habitat, has wanted to have hiking trails for residents and visitors to enjoy. So, we worked together, and with the help of many volunteers, completed the trail and are happy to have people hiking on it.”

Broughton Ledges Trail is on Ensign Pond Road about 7.5 miles west of Port Henry and 7 miles east of NYS Route 9N.



# CATS Connects

## Girl Scout Challenge

**Girl Scout Troop 4202** of Morrisonville, NY chose the Champlain Area Trails' Northern Pathways Challenge to earn their Trail Adventure Badge.

With support from an NYS Health Foundation grant, CATS created the Northern Pathways Patch Challenge to publicize and encourage people to hike trails in and just north of the Adirondack Park. For the girls, ranging in age from five to eleven, the Challenge showed how they could experience the challenges of hiking a variety of trails together and earn their badges.

The troop chose to hike Rattlesnake Mountain on national "Take Your Daughter on a Hike Day" in October. Many parents came out to hike with their girls up the sometimes-steep trail to the wonderful rock ledge looking out over Willsboro Bay and Lake Champlain. For many of the girls, it was their first summit.

Ava Currie, a 9-year-old scout said, "Rattlesnake Mountain was my favorite hike. This was the first time I hiked a mountain. The view at the top was beautiful. I had so much fun talking to my friends as we hiked."

Kim Irland, a parent volunteer, said, "It is truly remarkable to see our girls expand their self-image with each hiking experience. 'Courageous' and 'strong' are values we teach on every outdoor adventure, and I'd say our girls have courage and are strong."

It is gratifying and inspiring to have these girls explore trails, hike, and enjoy sharing outdoor experiences with each other. Our mission to make trails and save land includes connecting people with nature so having these girls complete the Challenge is fantastic!

**"It is truly remarkable to see our girls expand their self-image with each hiking experience..."**



# People with Nature

## CATSWomen

**CATSWomen creates a safe and encouraging space for female hikers** to become more confident in their outdoor adventuring. In this inaugural year, this hiking group included 51 hikers with varying abilities and ages, ranging from 12 to 76 years old.

This group completed 24 different hikes between May and October with zero injuries and only 1 blister! They hiked the Champlain Valley, High Peaks, Dix Mountain Range, Wilmington Wild Forest, McKenzie Mt Wilderness, Soda Range, Hammond Pond Wild Forest, Eagle Mountain Wild Forest, Split Rock Wild Forest, and the Giant Wilderness.

We so appreciate superstar volunteer Melissa Shepstone who planned and organized this first season of CATSWomen.



**In this inaugural year, this hiking group included 51 female hikers with varying abilities and ages, ranging from 12 to 76 years old.**



CONNECTING  
PEOPLE WITH  
NATURE

560 hours

**Volunteers** donated over 560 hours in 2021



67 miles

**Volunteers** helped build 67+ miles of trail



42 trails

**Volunteers** helped create 42 trails



983 acres

**Volunteers** helped manage 983 conserved acres



# CATS Connects People with Nature

**CATS depends on the power of our generous volunteers.** From making new trails to stuffing envelopes, CATS volunteers help us manage the 983 acres we've protected and the 42 trails totaling 67+ miles we've built over the last 10 years. In 2021 alone, CATS volunteers donated over 560 hours total. Volunteers created trails at the newly opened Spirit Sanctuary and Essex Quarry Nature Preserve. They also continue working on projects at Long Pond and the West Valley Trail, which CATS will open in 2022.



# CATS Promotes Economic Vitality

**Champlain Area Trails** make the Champlain Valley a desirable destination to live and visit and inspire long-term support for the overall economy in its communities. Our trails and nature preserves offer outdoor recreation opportunities which draw people to our region. They discover local eateries, seek accommodations, and support local businesses.



## ADIRONDACK HARVEST FESTIVAL



**CATS is a mainstay of the Adirondack Harvest Festival, which attracts thousands of people to the area.**

*Champlain Area Trails has been an integral part of the Adirondack Harvest Festival since it began. The Festival draws thousands of people to the Champlain Valley each year and is an economic stimulus as much as it is a community celebration. The annual group hike that CATS offers during the Festival provides a unique opportunity for people to directly engage with Adirondack farmland and wildlands. The CATS hike is a fun part of the Festival for local community members and visitors alike.*

— Laurie Davis of Adirondack Harvest Festival





# Financial Statement

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Dec. 31, 2021	Dec. 31, 2020
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$350,483	\$307,529
Pledges	\$23,523	\$18,000
Stewardship Fund	\$105,980	\$79,370
Conservation Project Funds	\$36,066	\$69,120
Conservation Land Holdings	\$546,586	\$546,586
Endowment Fund	\$47,762	\$0
Fixed Assets	\$3,315	\$372
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,113,715</b>	<b>\$1,020,977</b>
Liabilities	\$26,098	\$30,604
<b>Net Assests</b>	<b>\$1,087,617</b>	<b>\$990,373</b>

## SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS, 2021

<b>Revenue</b>		
Unrestricted Gifts	\$426,748	84.2%
Grants & Restricted Gifts	\$66,225	13.1%
Gifts to Stewardship Reserve	\$1,000	0.2%
Investment and Other Income	\$12,821	2.5%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$506,794</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Conservation & Trail Operations	\$305,466	74%
Fundraising	\$57,791	14%
Management & Administration	\$28,895	7%
Outreach & Communcation	\$20,640	5%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$412,792</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$94,002</b>	

### CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Dan Keegan, *Chair*  
 Annie McKinley, *Vice Chair*  
 Steven Shepstone, *Treasurer*  
 Martha Smiles, *Secretary*  
 Jackie Bowen  
 John Davis  
 Mike Derrick  
 Vincent Dupont  
 Cynthia Ford-Johnston  
 Genevieve Griffin  
 Ray Johnson  
 Steven Kellogg  
 Janet Mallon  
 Ana Maria Moore

### CURRENT STAFF MEMBERS

Chris Maron  
*Executive Director*

Amber Adamson  
*Development and  
 Communications Director*

Laurie Bonser  
*Operations and Financial  
 Manager*

Thomas Firkins  
*Summer Land Steward*

Tony Thoman  
*Director of Trails and  
 Land Management*

Mina Weymouth-Little  
*Summer Land Steward*

Champlain Area Trails (CATS) is proud to be an accredited land trust, a distinction showing we follow the highest standards and practices as we make trails and save land, all in the public interest.





# Get Involved in Some Seriously Fun Conservation



## PLAN A GIFT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Options for planned giving include leaving a gift of any size in your will or planning a gift of real estate.

## JOIN THE BOBCAT CLUB

Do you know you can make a difference every day with a sustaining membership? Monthly gifts – whether it's \$10, \$25, or \$100- make saving land and making trails possible year-round.

## DONATE STOCK

A gift of stock can provide you with financial and tax benefits while supporting conservation.

## VOLUNTEER

Give back to your community by building trails, sharing your talents to lead an outing, or doing office work.

Send an email to [info@champlainareatrails.com](mailto:info@champlainareatrails.com) to learn more.



Contact us for a confidential discussion of your giving options at (518) 962-2287 or [info@champlainareatrails.com](mailto:info@champlainareatrails.com).



[champlainareatrails.com](http://champlainareatrails.com)

CATS has protected almost 1,000 acres of land, made 42 trails totaling 67+ miles, held innumerable hikes and outdoor education outings, and annually published comprehensive trail maps – all of which promote economic vitality in New York’s Champlain Valley.