



2011 ANNUAL REPORT

While driving from Westport to Wadhams, we saw two cross-country skiers emerge from woods at the top of a hill and glide down into a little valley. Were they also going to Wadhams? And then to Essex? If so, their journey achieves a goal of Champlain Area Trails—to create trails for people to hike and ski from hamlet to hamlet where they patronize local businesses and benefit us all.

As you read our second Annual Report, take pride in the accomplishments you make happen. We've made great progress—we're completing the Essex - Westport Trail, the new Cheney Mt. Trail

in Moriah is already popular, the Woods-and-Swale Trail just opened in Westport, we'll soon have new trails in Elizabethtown and Willsboro, and plans have begun for trails into other communities.

We recently celebrated closing on our first conservation easement. And stay tuned—in partnership with Open Space Institute and others, building a more robust Champlain Valley conservation partnership to greatly advance land conservation goals.

To build public support, advance understanding of the local environment, and develop the next generation of

trail-keepers, we completed the youth portion of the Central Champlain Valley Outdoor Education Plan and are starting on the adult part so there will be a coordinated approach to increasing outdoor education. A huge sign of progress is that local leaders and business owners acknowledge the role CATS is playing to bring

people and communities together around a more regional economy.

These accomplishments may sound easy and yet it takes tremendous effort to create trails, save land, increase outdoor education, and coordinate a new non-profit. It is certainly fun, but such a challenge when thinking of all there is to do—so

many people to talk with, trails to explore, land at risk, and so little time. And that is why your support is so empowering.

It's easy to visualize getting from A to Z; the hard part is getting from B to Y. But like walking on a trail, we are proceeding step-by-step down the path of challenges, opportunities, setbacks, and progress to attain our goals. Thank you for helping to clear the trail.

*Katharine Preston, President
Chris Maron, Executive Director*



2011 Achievements 2012 Initiatives



“ At our small B&B in Elizabethtown, the guests are thrilled to have the CATS brochure and local trail maps. Many want to hike and enjoy the beauty of the surrounding area, not spend an entire day climbing a mountain. CATS trails offer them this option. For guests who have visited many times, they are excited to hike new trails. CATS brochure and website has brought us business as people see that the trails are for everyone. ”
 – Gail Testa, Namaste B&B Elizabethtown

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CATS STAFF

- Chris Maron – *Executive Director*
- Joanna Bateman – *Communications Director*

2011 UNAUDITED RESULTS

Operating Funds

Beginning Balance	.....	\$72,440
Income	.....	150,909
Expenses	.....	106,794
Restricted funds	.....	48,430
Operating Balance	.....	68,125

Revenues

Donations	.....	137,730
Events	.....	5,340
Raffle	.....	290
Total Income	.....	143,360
Transfer from Restricted Funds	.....	7,549
TOTAL INCOME	.....	150,909

Expenses

Program Services	.....	87,502	- 82%
Fundraising	.....	10,775	- 10%
Mgt/Admin	.....	8,517	- 8%
Total	.....	106,794	

Champlain Area Trails is creating a network of hiking/skiing trails in New York’s Champlain Valley that links communities, connects people to nature, enhances economic vitality and protects habitat, farmland, clean water, and scenic vistas. We envision the Champlain Valley with conserved forests and farmland surrounding vibrant hamlets with people hiking and skiing between communities and patronizing local businesses. The key to success is conservation of the landscape so natural and scenic resources sustain local communities, attract visitors and new residents, and provide habitat for native plants and animals.

CATS COMPLETES ITS FIRST CONSERVATION PROJECT

**2011 Achievements:
Saving Land**

Champlain Area Trails calls its land protection program the “Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership” to emphasize that cooperation is the key to conservation – it amplifies individual actions, broadens the base of support, and leads to success.

CATS FIRST PROJECT: THE JOHNSON FARM AND FOREST

77 acres, Champlain – On December 30, 2011 CATS completed its first land protection project when Ray and Lola Johnson donated a conservation easement to protect their beloved property in Clinton County. Our partnership with the Johnsons conserved productive farmland, biologically diverse woodlands, a large wetland, and 2950 feet of shoreline of Carbeau Creek, an important tributary of the Great Chazy River.



The Johnson property features beautiful Carbeau Creek.



Stouts Brook has great fish habitat.

SPRUCE MILL BROOK

264 acres, Lewis – Four siblings wanted to honor their parents whose property in the Split Rock Wildway features 1.6 miles of Spruce Mill Brook. They contacted CATS Director Chris Maron who arranged a bargain sale of the property (part sale-part donation). Because of its wilderness features, CATS enlisted Northeast Wilderness Trust as a partner to purchase the property. CATS will help raise its acquisition costs.

2011 Achievements: Making Trails

CATS OPENS THE NEW CHENEY MOUNTAIN TRAIL IN MORIAH

We are creating a network of hiking/skiing trails to connect communities in New York's Champlain Valley. Our initial trails have been in the Westport/Essex/Willsboro area so we were pleased when Moriah officials contacted us to coordinate making a new trail on town-owned land. We explored the property with Town Board members and interested citizens to settle on an excellent route to amazingly beautiful views and then coordinated volunteer projects to create the trail.

Cheney Mountain Trail is already becoming a popular hiking destination and is featured in efforts promoting the local economy. CATS organized two volunteer projects to create the trail.

As the last addition to the Adirondack Park, the Champlain Valley has little public land which limits hiking and skiing opportunities. CATS is addressing this by developing trails so people can enjoy the outdoors, experience the local environment, and stay healthy.

CATS volunteers cleared the Cheney Mountain trail to showcase its spectacular views.



CATS AND CAMPERS MAKE NEW TRAIL IN WESTPORT

2011 Achievements: Making Trails



The Lee Trust, a family which has owned its land in Westport since the early 1800s, graciously allowed CATS to develop the new “Woods and Swale Trail” as the gateway trail leading from Westport to Essex. Getting permission for the trail and scoping its route are first steps in making a trail. Clearing branches and fallen logs comes next. These North Country Campers worked one morning last summer to clear fallen branches,

like those pictured above, to make an easier path that thousands of people will enjoy in coming years.

Many of the campers were from urban areas so when one remarked, “I always wondered how trails were made,” it became clear that the morning was a learning experience for them all. CATS thanks North Country Camp for clearing the trail on that beautiful morning and all the volunteers who make and maintain our trails.



North Country campers enjoyed cutting fallen logs and branches to develop the new Woods and Swale Trail.

2011 Achievements: Education & Events

OUTDOOR EDUCATION & THE FIRST CATS TRAVEL WRITING CONTEST

THE CENTRAL CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

OUTDOOR EDUCATION PLAN FOR ALL AGES

A group of individuals seated in a room recall early outdoor experiences: a Boy Scout trip up Mount Marcy, excursions – fishing, boating, sledding, swimming, or hiking with Girl Scouts, friends, neighbors, parents, grandparents and siblings. Wonder is expressed about sleeping under the stars and a first overnight camping trip. The room is quiet as memories are called forth and shared. Thus began a series of meetings to develop the youth portion of a plan to increase outdoor education.

CATS is developing the Outdoor Education Action Plan, funded by a J.C. Kellogg Foundation grant, so people living in and visiting the central Champlain Valley will know more about its amazing local environment. The plan will promote cooperation among outdoor educators, schools, family groups, and communities to get more children outside, increase outdoor recreation for adults, and encourage better public health. It will also produce the next generation of trail stewards and build support for conserving the valley’s woods, wetlands, and natural areas.



Champlain Area Trails provide lifelong learning experiences.



Educators, naturalists and community members developed strategies to increase outdoor education



Peter Hartwell & David Thomas Train



Jesse Wimmnett and Amaya

CATS hosted the first in a series of travel writing contests to boost the local economy through outdoor recreation based tourism. We want people who are researching vacation destinations online to see the contest’s articles about NY’s Champlain Valley and get inspired to come here, enjoy the outdoors, visit local businesses, and tell others about this beautiful area.

The Fall contest’s first prize went to 9th-grader Peter Hartwell and his tutor, David Thomas Train who wrote of nature explorations, Westport historical sites and local farms. The People’s Choice prize went to Jesse Wimmnett, who named her baby on a CATS trail. And what’s the little girl’s name? “Amaya,” which is the Basque word for “a great resolution”—the title of her article.

EVENTS TO HONOR TRAILS, INCREASE AWARENESS, AND HAVE FUN

2011 Achievements: Education & Events



Acclaimed author, Bill McKibben, was the featured speaker at the Celebrate Champlain Area Trails event on National Trails Day, June 5. In his book *Wandering Home: A Long Walk across America's Most Hopeful Landscape*, Bill writes of a three-week hiking trip through the Champlain Valley. He congratulated CATS for strengthening local communities by making trails that bring people together. We designed the event to include families by having activities and a hike for kids.

CATS & Northeast Wilderness Trust co-host the “Get Wild and Connected” series

- Naturalist Alcott Smith led a hike in the Split Rock Wildway and explained “*How Wildlife Prepare for the Cold.*”
- “Cougar ReWilding” president Chris Spatz spoke about the absence of cougars in the eastern United States and the need to reintroduce them to create a more healthy ecosystem.
- Sue Morse, the wildlife tracker, photographer, and founder of Keeping Track gave an excellent presentation titled “*Wild, Yet Wonderfully Near Us: Bobcats Return to the Champlain Valley.*”

2012 – 2013 INITIATIVES

Protecting Natural Habitat, Farmland, Clean Water, and Scenic Vistas

- Conserve a 319-acre farm in Willsboro
- Make robust strides with the Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership
- Move forward with Long Pond Watershed Protection Project
- Advance the ongoing land protection projects

Creating Trails that Provide Healthy Outdoor Recreation for Everyone

- Complete the Essex to Westport Trail Loop
- Extend trail to Willsboro
- Develop trail along Boquet River in Elizabethtown
- New Trails in Westport, Willsboro, Moriah, and Lewis

Connecting People to Nature through Outdoor Education

- Complete and begin implementing the Central Champlain Valley Outdoor Education Plan
- Host hikes, events, and speakers

Promoting Economic Vitality

- Coordinate Spring, Summer, and Fall Travel-Writing Contests
- Use trails to link communities, attract visitors, & encourage cooperation to provide services
- Encourage local farming as part of Champlain Valley Farming Initiative

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