



# The Alpine Steward

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

*Conserving the Alpine Areas of Northeastern North America*



## Wilderness? An Ethical Question?

Bondcliff from Mt Bond, White Mountains, New Hampshire

by Peter Palmiotto

This year we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of Laura and Guy Waterman's book *Wilderness Ethics*. We do so because in the 50 years since the Wilderness Act's passage, 756 Wilderness areas have been designated covering 109.5 million acres. In October, President Obama added the San Gabriele Mountains outside of Los Angeles to the list of protected areas as a National Monument. The Wilderness Society's press release says, "The San Gabriel Mountains are in one of the busiest forests in the nation, serving as the wild "backyard" for Los Angeles...serving as a recreation destination for millions..." How can a natural area serving as a recreational destination for millions remain 'wild'? I suppose it depends on your definition of 'wild' or of 'wilderness'.

In the Federal Wilderness Act of 1964, Howard Zahniser wrote: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." A visitor who does not remain? If that is the mark of wilderness than indeed we have lots of wilderness, but if there are millions visiting the wilderness are they actually experiencing 'wilderness'? Are they experiencing the 'spirit of wildness' that the Waterman's wished to preserve by writing *Wilderness Ethics*?

It seems to me that the ethical question that arises when we ask if individuals are experiencing the 'spirit of wildness' is to ask: by who's definition? In the Adirondack Park of New York State, wilderness is defined as being contiguous land of more the 10,000 acres 'having a primeval character, without significant improvement or permanent human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore, where necessary, its natural conditions'. Is greater than 10,000 acres needed to experience the 'spirit of wildness'? In the high peaks wilderness area, one of the

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## Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award: 2014

by Mike Jones

Dr. Nancy G. Slack was awarded the 2014 Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award for her lifetime achievements in alpine ecology, outreach, and conservation. The award was presented at the Waterman Fund's annual dinner, held in Crawford Notch, NH on October 25. The Waterman Fund awards this prize each year to a person or organization that has demonstrated a long-term commitment to protecting the

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Rick Paradis

I had the opportunity to participate in the National Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico this past October. This event, which attracted over 1,000 participants, was organized and hosted by a coalition of government, non-profit, institutional, and business partners to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act. This piece of federal legislation, signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, established a system of Wilderness Areas on federal lands that now totals nearly 110 million acres.

Although the chosen venue for this event was a characteristically un-wild downtown 20-story glass and concrete hotel and conference facility, the assortment of speakers, presentations, panels, exhibits, and other activities was absolutely spot-on in exploring the myriad of topics in wilderness preservation and stewardship. From the deep historical roots of the “wilderness idea” to the challenges

of managing wilderness areas in contemporary landscape settings, the conference brought together wilderness scholars, advocates, stewards, and students all committed to addressing these topics in a stimulating and collegial setting.

My interest and advocacy regarding wilderness harkens back to my undergraduate years at the University of New Hampshire. I recall reading Roderick Nash’s seminal work on wilderness as well as the writings of Muir, Thoreau and Leopold. This initial intellectual immersion prompted me to first engage in advocating for wilderness during the public hearings held on behalf of the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975. Since that time, I’ve tried to remain current on the topic, both for personal reasons and as an academic working in the field of environmental studies. To my surprise, this conference opened up many new ideas and themes regarding wilderness. Most noteworthy were sessions on the

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meaning of wilderness to the millennial generation, how we can keep wilderness culturally relevant in the epoch of the Anthropocene, and the role of recreation ecology in understanding and addressing human impact in wilderness areas.

During an evening poster session at the conference, I displayed information about the Waterman Fund and the work we do here in the Northeast advancing alpine conservation and stewardship. I was heartened to see so many other organizations, both large and small, also working tirelessly on behalf of wild places in their "neck of the woods" or on national and even global wilderness campaigns. It is a wonderfully diverse network!

Over 70 exhibitors participated in the conference. They ran the gamut from the large federal agencies such as the National Park Service and the US Forest Service to some of the advocacy groups like WildEarth Guardians and Great Old Broads for Wilderness. Many business interests were also present, displaying their equipment, clothing, and technology devices, no doubt all necessary for your next wilderness experience. Conference attendees were provided with a valuable opportunity to mingle with representatives of these assorted agencies, organizations, and businesses, coming away with new insight and a copy of their latest full-color brochure or map.

What struck me most about the National Wilderness Conference and those in attendance was the abundance of

young people actively engaged in wilderness preservation and stewardship. Sure, the grey beards were there, representing many of the agencies and organizations, especially those with seasoned track records of wilderness management and advocacy. But if the folks milling around the assorted conference venues and participating in the diversity of programs is any indication of the wilderness movement at large, then it is a movement or cause that has captured the attention and interest of this young generation. As a grey beard myself, this indeed heartening. As a board member of the Waterman Fund, this is also encouraging as one of the core elements of our recently developed strategic plan is to encourage more young people to become involved. It appears they already are.

**Note:** This December marks the end of a six-year stint serving on the board of the Waterman Fund. I'm also winding down a two-year term as board president. I'd like to take this opportunity to heartily thank my fellow board members, both present and past, for allowing me to serve an absolutely wonderful and inspiring organization. I know of no more dedicated group that remains true to its mission working tirelessly on behalf of alpine conservation and stewardship here in the Northeast. It was both an honor and pleasure to serve on the board for these past six years and I look forward to remaining involved with the Waterman Fund as it continues its important and valued work into the future.

Photo at left: Alcove Kiva, Bandelier National Monument, New Mexico.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Treasurer's Report

by Matt Larson

Despite a highly volatile stock market as I prepare this report in mid-October, the Fund's total assets are slightly more than \$353,000, up about \$4,000 from the same time last year. Over the same time period, liabilities (grant payables, primarily) have dropped from just under \$25,000 to approximately \$17,000. The Fund's net worth, therefore, is up nearly \$12,000 over the past year.

Over the last twelve months we have awarded grants totaling \$17,200 to six worthy recipients and once again presented our two essay contest winners with a total of \$2,000. Total

operating expenses for the year are just over \$1,500, which is down considerably from the prior year year. The Fund's year-to-date contributions are slightly more than \$6,500, also down from the previous year, but the bulk of the Fund's annual contributions arrive in November and December, so we hope to add considerably to this total in the coming months. Since the Fund's operating expenses continue to be quite small in relation to annual contributions, with almost all of our spending supporting core programs and events, we should once again have a surplus at the close of the fiscal year to augment our investment accounts.

# 2014 WATERMAN FUND GRANTS

## Science, Stewardship, and Trails

by Charlie Jacobi

Six of seven grant proposals submitted to the Waterman Fund in 2014 received funding. Grant requests totaled \$26,872 and we disbursed \$17,200. Five of the new proposals focused on science and there was one each for stewardship and trails. We also caught up on the payments for the now completed Mount Washington Observatory museum exhibit, which was funded in 2013 for \$15,000 over three years.



Glen Mittlehauser and the Maine Natural History Observatory received \$4,000 for their proposal to compile a list of alpine and subalpine plants for Baxter State Park, from historical records and conduct new field surveys of summits and subalpine habitats using citizen science volunteers. The new surveys will include less studied summits. A digital guide to alpine plants also will be produced as part of the project. This work is a small part of a much larger five-year effort

to compile and inventory plants from all habitats in the park and produce a comprehensive field guide.

**Update:** Two student interns and 16 volunteers joined the MNHO crew in the field for 22 days in 2014. This hardy group



documented 73 species in the alpine and subalpine zones in the Katahdin region, 69 species in the Brothers region, and 93 species in the Traveler region, and took 4,500 photos.

The Fund awarded the Appalachian Mountain Club \$2,500 to help establish the first GLORIA site in the northeastern U.S. in the White Mountains. GLORIA (Global Observation Research in Alpine Environments) is an

international program to establish the baseline composition of summit alpine vegetation using standardized protocols to detect changes in species composition due to climate change. Seven experienced alpine scientists from the northeastern U.S. and Canada representing three universities, the White Mountain National Forest, and Beyond Katahdin are collaborating on the project.

**Update:** A successful field season established plots and collected data on Little Monroe, Eisenhower, Boott Spur, and North Lafayette Peaks.

A \$4,000 grant to Jessica Rykken of Beyond Katahdin to study arthropods on the Uapishka Plateau is described in a separate article on the facing page.

The final research project awarded was a continuation of funding for Nancy Slack's work on Alpine Snowbed Communities and Rare Bryophytes and Lichens on Mount Washington. This work provides a quantitative baseline for snowbed communities in the face of climate change. Previous field work resulted in the re-discovery of a rare liverwort after 100 years absence.

The stewardship project came from John Marunowski and the Pemigewasset Ranger District in the White Mountain National Forest. We awarded \$3,700 to them for a Trailhead Steward Program to educate hikers before they ascend above treeline. The steward will work the Old Bridle Path/Falling Waters, Lincoln Woods and the Ammonoosuc Ravine Trailheads using maps, photos, and other materials to explain the sensitivity of the alpine zone, the previous successes of education and trail work on Franconia Ridge, and provide safety information. At the mountain bottom or mountaintop, these programs are the bread and butter of the Waterman Fund's on-the-ground stewardship mission.

**Update:** By the end of the summer, stewards made more than 12,000 visitor contacts and the program continued into the fall with volunteers.

The trails project funded was for \$2,000 to Acadia National Park for trail work on Sargent Mountain. Park Trails Foreman Gary Stellflug and I developed this project to build a causeway to define the tread clearly in a muddy and widened section of the Sargent Mountain South Ridge Trail near the summit. My ridgerunners partnered with our Youth Conser-

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# Alpine Arthropods of the Uapishka Plateau, Québec

## (or ... 53 million black flies and counting)

by Jessica Rykken

Ask anyone who has visited a northeastern alpine area during black fly season: insects dominate the landscape. While not all as noticeable or numerous (or annoying) as black flies, arthropods comprise by far the largest component of the alpine fauna, yet we know disproportionately little about their habitat associations or diversity. Given their critical ecological roles as pollinators, decomposers, and predators, to name a few, such a knowledge gap has significant implications for the effective management of alpine ecosystems, and also for our ability to detect change in the face of environmental threats such as climate change.

In the summer of 2014, supported by a grant from the Waterman Fund, myself and a field assistant, Ali Hogeboom, traveled more than 1,350 km northwards from our starting point in Whately, Massachusetts, to establish a baseline inventory for several key arthropod functional groups within the Réserve de Biodiversité Uapishka, a remote, isolated alpine area in central Québec. We sampled five microhabitats to document the diversity and habitat associations of species in this alpine landscape, and also piloted protocols for the rapid assessment of alpine arthropod diversity that may be used for future monitoring efforts, or for comparative studies with other eastern alpine areas.

In early July, Ali and I backpacked all of our sampling gear into the tundra, and set up a basecamp between Mont Jauffret and Mont de la Tour Boissinot on the western edge of the plateau. From here, we hiked east and west to set up pitfall traps

(for ground-dwelling predators and scavengers) and bee bowls (for pollinators) at three replicate sites for each of these alpine habitats: krummholz, snow beds, rills and small streams, wetland edges, and tundra. Despite cool temperatures, high winds, and several days of rain, we collected a respectable diversity of specimens in all of our target taxa.

Species identification is ongoing, but highlights so far include about a dozen species of ground beetles (Family Carabidae), many of which are arctic/alpine specialists, and some of which are strongly associated with snow fields, where they are predators on insect “fall out” stranded on the snow. We also collected more than 150 wolf spiders (Family Lycosidae), some of these likely employ similar predatory strategies on the lingering snow. Blooming plants such as bog laurel, cloud-berry, mountain heath, alpine azalea, and Labrador tea provided nectar and/or pollen for the 60 native bees (all but two were



bumble bees) and 23 flower flies we collected by net and in bee bowls. Ants were also a focal group, but we collected these at only two of the sites.

Once we are finished with taxonomy, all biodiversity results will be accessible on the Beyond Ktaadn website (<http://beyondktaadn.org>) and on Discover Life ([www.discoverlife.org](http://www.discoverlife.org)), which allows interactive exploration of the data, including links to species pages.

Photos:

Alpine topography of the Monts Groulx massif in central Québec, Canada.

Ali Hogeboom samples invertebrates in a heath community in the western Monts Groulx, Québec.

## Deadline for Grant Applications

Grant applications for alpine project funding are due on **December 15**. For more information, visit: [www.watermanfund.org/grants/grant-guidelines](http://www.watermanfund.org/grants/grant-guidelines) or by contacting [grants@watermanfund.org](mailto:grants@watermanfund.org).

To apply, submit a proposal as a pdf file to [grants@watermanfund.org](mailto:grants@watermanfund.org). Paper applications are no longer accepted.

# SEVENTH ANNUAL Waterman Fund Alpine Essay Contest Winners

By Bethany Taylor

The Waterman Fund is delighted to announce the winners of its seventh annual Alpine Essay Contest. The Fund received over thirty entries this year and through much thoughtful reading and fruitful discussion, the Fund's reading committee selected Jenny Wagner's essay, "The Cage Canyon," as this year's winner. Nancy Rich's essay, "Walking with Our Faces to the Sun," was selected as the runner up.

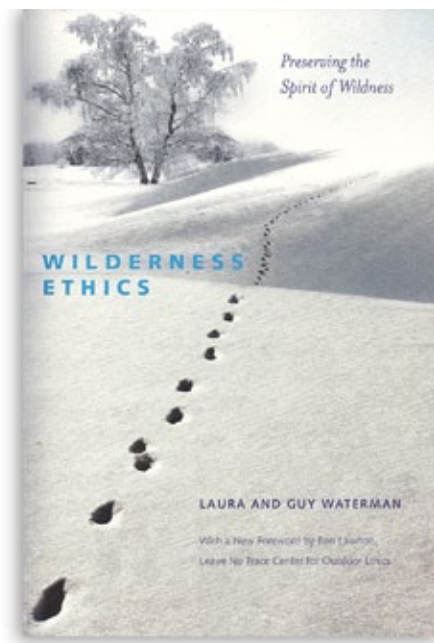
The contest theme for 2014 asked writers to explore the value of Wilderness, fifty years after the Wilderness Act. Submissions ran a wide gamut of responses, all reiterating the sentiment that wilderness, Wilderness, and wildness have a firm place in our lives and hearts. In his 1960 "Wilderness Letter," writer and conservationist Wallace Stegner warned that something priceless would go out of us as a people if we did not take action to protect wild places. The essay submissions reassure all readers that this essential wildness has not only remained, but grown stronger and more diverse in its articulations.

Wagner, of Boulder, CO and (currently) Senegal, works in experiential education. Her essay is an exploration of wildness through her experience working at Mission: Wolf, a wolf sanctuary in southern Colorado. The Fund selected

Wagner's essay for her abilities to weave an engaging personal narrative into the larger story of wolves—a cultural touchstone for wildness—and wilderness preservation and protection. Her essay asks, rather than answers, questions about the place of humans in among wilder beings and wilderness. In recognition of Wagner's voice and talents, the Fund is pleased to award her a \$1,500 prize to further her writing and explorations.

Rich, of Chesterfield, MA, uses her PhD in Environmental Studies for environmental advocacy in the Berkshires. Her essay focuses on the many questions and few answers about wilderness, wildness, and places she has encountered in her winter fieldwork in the Berkshires. The Fund was drawn to her essay for Rich's evocative imagery and her rather more personal reflections on ideas of wilderness—the hills of western Massachusetts are not a Wilderness, yet Rich finds a beautiful amount of wilderness to share with readers. Rich will be awarded \$500 for her essay.

Wagner's essay will be published in the Winter/Spring 2015 issue of *Appalachia*, the Appalachian Mountain Club's biannual journal of mountaineering and conservation. Wagner's piece appears, excerpted, on the following page and both essays will appear in December on the Waterman Fund website, [www.watermanfund.org](http://www.watermanfund.org).



## *A Must Read for the Winter Ahead*

Laura and Guy Waterman's *Wilderness Ethics* is re-issued in honor of the Wilderness Act's 50th anniversary, with a new foreword by Ben Lawhon, education director of Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

**From the back cover:** "It has been 50 years since the passage of the Wilderness Act, the landmark piece of legislation that set aside and protected pristine parts of the American landscape. *Wilderness Ethics* helps put the many issues surrounding wilderness into focus. The Watermans ask us to evaluate the impact that even 'environmentally conscious' values have on the wilderness experience, and to ask the question: What are we trying to preserve?"

Available at your local bookstore or at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



From Jenny Wagner's

## *The Cage Canyon*

The first time I meet Kiya, she is chained to the passenger seat of a two-door Audi, glaring at me suspiciously with intense yellow eyes. When I approach the car, she cowers in the corner as far as the chain around her neck will allow. If I try to open the door, she might hurt herself struggling against the restraints in her attempt to get away from me, so I don't push my luck. I take a deep breath as the woman who chained Kiya to the seat steps out of the driver side door.

Kiya is a two-year-old black wolf. I am a 22-year-old blonde girl with a liberal arts degree who was never even allowed to own a dog as a kid, wearing filthy Carhartt jeans and a weeks' worth of grime. I live and volunteer at Mission: Wolf, a captive wolf sanctuary overlooking the jagged Sangre de Cristo Mountains in southern Colorado.

I have never seen a wolf in the wild. My ancestors, settlers from Europe, initiated the decline of the North American grey wolf by killing countless bison, elk, moose, and deer. Then, beginning in 1906, the US Forest Service and US Bureau of Biological Survey (now the US Fish and Wildlife Service) sponsored a nationwide extermination of grey wolves to make grazing land safe for domestic cattle. Up until 1965, a wolf carcass could earn you up to fifty dollars from the US Government. At that time, a gallon of gasoline sold for thirty-five cents.

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## The 2015 Alpine Essay Contest

Guy and Laura Waterman spent a lifetime reflecting and writing on the Northeast's mountains. The Waterman Fund seeks to further their legacy of stewardship through essays that celebrate and explore issues of wilderness, wildness, and humans through the Fund's annual essay contest.

In conjunction with the Museum of the White Mountains' exhibit on Women and the Mountains, the 2015 essay contest invites emerging writers to explore the question of who the stewards of wilderness are. Statistically, more men than women explore professional careers in the stewardship of wilderness and public land management. What, if any, bearing does the gender of stewards have on our shared and individual perceptions of, and relationship to, wilderness?

Do you find a difference in how men and women experience and steward wilderness, personally or professionally? Alternately, does the spirit of wilderness transcend anything so human as gender? Is there a

relationship between gender, wilderness exploration, and the management of these invaluable public lands?

Emerging writers are encouraged to explore the interplay between men, women, and wilderness, with particular regard to how this shapes our individual and cultural perceptions and stewardship of wild places.

The deadline for submissions is **April 15, 2015**. We will announce the winners at the end of June. The winning essayist will be awarded \$1500 and published in *Appalachia*. The Honorable Mention essay will receive \$500. Both essays will be published on our website as well. Submissions should include contact information and a few lines about why the writers feel their essay is appropriate for the contest. Typed, double-spaced manuscripts in a 12-point font are preferred. Online submissions are appreciated, but not required. If submitting by mail, please include a SAS postcard or an email address. The receipt of all submissions will be acknowledged.



# THE YEAR *in*

1. Alpine topography of the Monts Groulx massif in central Québec, Canada.
2. Trailhead Steward in action, White Mountain National Forest.
3. Sargent Mountain South Ridge Trail, Acadia National Park: before.
4. Sargent Mountain South Ridge Trail, Acadia National Park: after.
5. Jessica Rykken (right) and Ali Hogeboom (left), Waterman Fund grant recipients, pause on an alpine summit in the western Monts Groulx, Québec.
6. Mount Webster from Mount Willard, White Mountains, New Hampshire.
7. Laura Waterman and participants on the Mount Washington field trip.
8. Early winter hikers on the ridgeline of Mount Mansfield, Vermont.



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# Photographs



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# A Conversation with Iris and William Baird



Iris Baird and others on the Mount Washington Field Trip.

by Kim Votta

We were fortunate to have Iris Baird join us on this summer's Mount Washington Field Trip (see *Whipped by the Wind on Mt. Washington* on page 12). Iris is a long-time resident of Lancaster, New Hampshire, an advocate for wildflower conservation, a historian and writer, and an intrepid hiker and adventurer. Then there is Bill. William Baird did not join us on that wonderful field trip, but I had a chance to speak with him and Iris in their home this past September. Bill was a paper chemist for forty years at the Groveton paper mill. He also has a great passion for the outdoors; he was a technical climber, trail builder and maintainer, and author of the North Country section of the AMC's *White Mountain Guide* for several decades. They both love their mountain home.

How they ended up here is an interesting story. We might have lost them to the northern reaches of Maine or the High Peaks of the Adirondacks. Looking for a new job and a place to settle centered by a mighty peak, Bill drew a 50-mile circle on a map around three of our region's highest—Katahdin, Marcy, and Washington—and started applying for jobs within the circles' radii. Mount Washington won.

So began decades of adventure in New Hampshire's White Mountains and beyond. Quickly becoming close friends with climbing gurus, Robert and Miriam Underhill, the two helped open the infamously steep (now closed) West Side Trail on North Percy in the Nash Stream Forest in New Hampshire. Already far into the venture, the foursome thought it might be wise to ask the Groveton paper mill for permission to open the trail on the then mill-owned land. Since Bill worked at the mill, he was elected for the task. Bill posed the question and was happy to receive a quick yes, though surprised when it came with a request that the trail builders change the color of the blue blazes marking the path along the steep slabs.

Seems blue was the same color used for marking property boundaries in the area. The foursome's trail building had not gone unnoticed after all!

There are many more stories to share. On the day of our field trip, Iris told us about her love and knowledge of alpine flowers. Throughout her hiking career, she observed and monitored many beloved species. Her love of mountain habitats and flowers developed in high school where she spent summers in the Adirondacks as a camp counselor. In the 1960's she accompanied Miriam Underhill on many hikes, helping to carry the heavy equipment Miriam used to photograph alpine flowers for the first printing of *Mountain Flowers of New England* published in 1964 by the Appalachian Mountain Club. That first guide was precursor to today's *Field Guide to the New England Alpine Summits* by this year's Alpine Steward Award recipient, Nancy Slack, and photographer Alison Bell.



After the field trip, Iris emailed a photo taken in 2005 of Alpine-brook Saxifrage (*Saxifraga rivularis*). She was thrilled to see this alpine flower species doing well on the summit that day. She shared her findings with the folks at

the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau as well. They were happy to hear the news as they had not had a report from that spot on that species in years.

When I asked Iris and Bill when they stopped hiking, Bill quickly corrected me by asking in return, "Have we?" Bill is 91 now and not as mobile as he used to be; nor is Iris. They did manage to get out on a short hike a week before our sit-down however. Their legs and their hearts are still on the trail.



# • • • BOARD MEMBER UPDATE • • •

by Rick Paradis

With the departure of Julia Goren, Kent McFarland, and Jeff Lougee last year, the Waterman Fund welcomes three new board members, **Peter Palmiotto, Judy Marden, and Kim Votta.**

Peter is on the faculty at Antioch University New England where he directs the MERE Project and the Conservation Biology Master's degree concentration.

He received his Doctorate of Forestry in Ecosystem Ecology from Yale University, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 1998. He has conducted forest ecology research in Chile, Puerto Rico, Indonesia, Malaysia and New Hampshire. His current research involves studying the population ecology of northern hardwood and spruce/fir forests and alpine areas in the White Mountains and on Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire. His academic interests include the ecology of forested and alpine ecosystems and applying the knowledge of system dynamics for conservation and sustainable management goals.

Judy lives in an old farmhouse on a "mountaintop" in Greene, Maine. She is president of the Androscoggin Land Trust, and has put conservation easements on her surrounding 200 acres. Before retirement, her last career (of 5, all at Bates College) was managing the coastal Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation Area. She remains advisor to the Bates Outing Club, and is an avid cross country skier,



New board members Peter Palmiotto, Judy Marden, Kim Votta.

snowshoer, and kayaker. As a student and instructor at AMC-ADK Winter Mountaineering School, she played with the Watermans on many glorious mountain adventures in the Presidentials and Franconias.

Kim is a management consultant for nonprofits and small businesses. This is Kim's fourth career. She was the research coordinator for the Margret and H.A. Rey Center, overseeing environmental monitoring and stewardship programs in New Hampshire's White Mountains. She has taught Environmental Science, and occasionally still does. Beforehand, she spent many years in nonprofit finance and management. Kim lives in Lancaster, New Hampshire with her husband, Ken. Her favorite pastime is spending time in the woods whether in hiking boots or on cross-country skis.

Peter, Judy and Kim bring a wealth of knowledge and experiences in alpine conservation and stewardship to the Waterman Fund Board.

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## *Science, Stewardship, and Trails ... Continued from page 4*

vation Corps (both funded by Friends of Acadia) and were joined by our trail crew to knock the trails construction off in two days. It's amazing how much effort it takes to do even a small amount of work on trails at higher elevations (for us, about 1370 feet!). The project also had components for observational research and education.

As mentioned, the Mount Washington Observatory Project exhibit has been completed. We had delayed the first of three years of funding for this because nothing concrete had been produced in 2013. However, 2014 saw a very nice finished product installed in the museum for which President Rick Paradis provided significant input on the content. Rick and Laura Waterman attended the opening ceremony in June, where the Waterman Fund was recognized as a contributor. The Board decided to pay both the 2013 and 2014 installments, a total of \$10,000, putting us back on the payment schedule and leaving one more payment in 2015. Check

out the exhibit next time you are at the summit of Mount Washington. The Fund is getting some great high altitude exposure to a lot of people. All in all, we awarded funding to some terrific projects again this year and we look forward to the project final reports.



## Alpine Steward Nominations Sought

To nominate someone for the Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Award, please send nomination letters to the Waterman Fund (forms available on our website), citing specific examples of the nominee's stewardship of the Northeast's wilderness, along with other relevant personal or professional experience. If you have nominated someone in the past, the nomination remains in our files and is reviewed annually.

***Nominations are due January 15, 2015.***

# Whipped by the Wind on Mt. Washington



## • 2nd ANNUAL WATERMAN FUND FIELD TRIP •

by Judith Marden

It was a day full of mountain miracles.

In the warm, sunny parking lot, we gazed up at wispy clouds clinging to Mt. Washington's summit, and wondered what the peak would show us, this time.

Fifteen Waterman Fund donors, friends, and Board members gathered to take the trip to the summit on July 25, and fifteen returned (yes, it is good to bring 'em back alive!), with eyes

wider opened to the activities at the Observatory, botany of the Alpine Garden, the "Extreme Mt. Washington" exhibits in the newly renovated museum, and an in-person exposure to alpine weather.

We departed in a van and two vehicles; the group was kept small intentionally to

minimize the impact on the mountain—as our wilderness ethics encourage.

We ascended quickly, soon stopping to descend the steep rocky trail to the Alpine Garden. Already, a strong wind buffeted us, demanding windshells and bracing against the gusts. What a dramatic change in a matter of minutes!

Picking our way down the through the boulders, we found wonderful flowering plants: Alpine Goldenrod, Mountain Avens, Boott's Rattlesnake-root, Harebell, Cottongrass, and dwarf willow and birch spread across the mountain meadows. After an hour or so, we continued to the summit. It was socked in—almost a complete whiteout—with wild and swirling winds!

Gazing out at the universal view from a table near a window, we enjoyed President Rick's incomparable homemade sandwiches.

The Mt. Washington Observatory staff invited us to view a film about the new Extreme Mt. Washington Exhibit. The Fund had supported the exhibit on Alpine stewardship that shows, with interpretive material, flowering plants encased



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## 2nd Annual Field Trip ... from previous page

in Lucite, demonstrating the variety of life that survives, and even thrives, in the harsh weather.

Then we were invited into the Observatory, and treated to a special grand tour beginning with a climb to blasting winds at the top of the tower where the view was just barely becoming visible, and ending in the innermost sleeping quarters, where famous Marty the cat languorously accepted our petting.

The scariest part was yet to come: the drive down the precipitous Auto Road seemed more challenging than the

ride up, not because our driver wasn't skillful but the turns felt sharper and the slopes steeper with gravity nudging us along. Once out of the summit cloud, the views opened, once again awing us with the grandeur of the Presidentials.

We are most grateful to the Mount Washington Auto Road for donating the van and waiving entrance fees for this annual field trip. As we endeavor to protect the alpine peaks, it is so important to be reminded why they deserve protection, and nothing reminds us more effectively than being there in person.

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## Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award ... from page 1

physical and spiritual qualities of the Northeast's mountain wilderness.

Nancy is perhaps best known amongst northeastern alpine enthusiasts for a series of stunning field guides published with frequent collaborator Allison Bell, including *Adirondack Alpine Summits: An Ecological Field Guide* (Adirondack Mountain Club, 2007) and *Field Guide to New England Alpine Summits* (Appalachian Mountain Club, 2013), both representing expanded versions of classic works first published in the 1990s. Both books concisely and beautifully capture the complex alpine environment and have inspired younger generations. Allison Bell presented a short and amusing anecdotal history of her work with Nancy, illustrated with her ravishing photographs of flowering alpine tundra.

Nancy is also the author of *G. Evelyn Hutchinson and the Invention of Modern Ecology* (Yale University Press, 2010) and an editor of *Bryophyte Ecology and Climate Change*



Nancy Slack receives the 2014 Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award from Laura Waterman.

(Cambridge University Press, 2011), and has published many peer-reviewed papers on bryophytes and northeastern ecosystems.

Nancy is Professor of Biology, emerita, at Russell Sage College in Troy, NY, and continues to lead studies of alpine snowbed vegetation in the Presidential Range.



## Thank You from Page Hollow

Laura Waterman

**Rebecca Oreskes, Val Stori, and Carl Demrow**, past board members, who, at our invitation, talked to us about how we can do our work better. **Jed Williamson** for his thoughtful guidance on fundraising and development. **Brian Post** for his management of our website. **Bethany Taylor** for her graceful enthusiasm and guidance of our Essay Contest.

**Chris Woodside**, *Appalachia's* editor, for her generous support for our Essay Contest, and for continuing to publish the winning essay in the December issue. **Rebecca Oreskes, Carl Demrow, Annie Bellerose, Julia Goren, and Val Stori**, past board members, for reading for the Essay Contest.

**Michael Wejchert** and **Bethany Taylor**, past Essay Contest winners, who read their work at the Stewardship Gathering last November, and to **Chris Woodside** who moderated the

discussion. Also thanks to Michael who read for the 2014 Essay Contest. **Howie and Sue Wemyss** and the **Mount Washington Auto Road** for driving us up the mountain for a day learning about alpine plants and talking about stewardship issues, a Field Trip offered to our donors and friends. **Mount Washington Observatory Staff** for giving our donors and friends a fabulous and fascinating tour of the Observatory and Museum. **Sam Dunwoody**, our intern, for his diligent and thoughtful work. **University of Vermont** for their support of **Rick Paradis**, Waterman Fund board president, and faculty member of the Environmental Program, to attend the Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, NM. **Anne McKinsey** of AMCK Web & Print Design for the superbly conscientious work she does on *The Alpine Steward*.

*Wilderness? An ethical question? ... from page 1*

most popular areas in the park, there are numerous lean-tos that provide shelter and a staffed outpost in its center for human safety. Many would say that with the shelters, the safety outpost, and so many people using the area that going into the high peaks is not a wilderness experience. Others of course would say it is.

Mount Monadnock in southwest New Hampshire has 100,000+ persons climb its bald peak each year. From its 3,165' summit hikers can obtain a beautiful 360° view of the region, the distant mountains and even Boston on a clear day. The mountain stands in the center of 5,000 acres of protected land, no public lean-to exists on the mountain and no dogs are allowed. Many of the people that climb the mountain claim it as their first 'wilderness' experience and are very satisfied, even exhilarated by it. Are they experiencing the 'spirit of wildness'? It is possible that many of these people would not climb the mountain and would not have their 'wilderness' experience if they were not among other people. Is it a matter of educating them about what a 'real' wilderness experience is? Or is it a matter of acknowledging the fact that to many people their definition of a wilderness experience is something different than what was conceived in 1964 and purported by wilderness advocates?

According to E.O. Wilson's Biophylla hypothesis, humans have an innate evolutionary need for a connection with the biological world, a need for nature, perhaps a need for 'wilderness'. Does that need require we sit on a mountain top alone in a 10,000 acre wilderness or does that need simply require we are out in nature experiencing it as we individually have the capacity to do?

Laura and Guy Waterman's *Wilderness Ethics* directs us to ask hard questions about how we experience wilderness, how

we affect it and others in it. Is the use of cell phones, now an integral part of daily life for millions of people, an intrusion into wilderness? Or is it an intrusion into your 'wilderness'? That depends of course on ones definition of wilderness, doesn't it?

First nations people did not necessarily have a word in their vocabulary for 'wilderness' as they did not conceive of themselves separate from the land they lived in. Modern humans seem to have separated themselves from the wilderness in order to define it. For many, 'wilderness' is that untrammelled place where the natural world functions without the direct influence of humans (e.g., the high peaks in the Adirondack Park), where a cell phone call would be an intrusion. For many others 'wilderness' is different (e.g. Mount Monadnock), where a cell phone is used to share their experience. Clearly there are different perceptions of what is wilderness and how to experience it.

Yet asking how our behavior in 'wilderness' impacts the wilderness and each other's experience in it, no matter how one defines it, is important. The Waterman's book challenged us 20 years ago to ask those questions. Its recent reprinting now challenges a new generation to ask the hard, ethical questions about wilderness and our role in using it and preserving it. Fifty years ago the Wilderness Act provided the authority to preserve Wilderness areas. *Wilderness Ethics*, is a book all should read to raise our consciousness, challenge our ethics and hopefully guide us to preserving the 'spirit of wilderness'.

Wilderness? It is an ethical question.

*Peter Palmiotto, D.F. is Director of the Monadnock Ecological Research and Education Project; Director, Conservation Biology MS concentration, Antioch University New England.*

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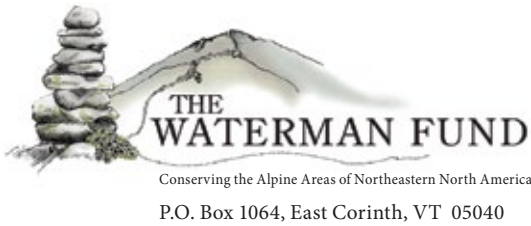
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**SAVE THE DATE!**

2015 Northeast Alpine Gathering November 6-8, 2015



Photo courtesy of New England Outdoors

On November 6-8, 2015 Baxter State Park will host the 9th Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering at the Twin Pines resort on the shores of Millinocket Lake in north central Maine. This facility affords fantastic views of Katahdin, cozy cabins with modern amenities and hearty food. *Plan to join us!*