

BERKSHIRE NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL

Fall 2020

LANDKEEPERS REPORT

Make Some Autumn Memories
Resilience and Heritage
You've Protected More Land—Thank You!
Wildlife on Camera

LANDKEEPERS REPORT

Fall 2020

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BERKSHIRE
Natural Resources Council

THE LANDKEEPERS

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The view from Spruce Hill in North Adams.

PHOTO: BNRC STAFF

FINDING MOMENTS OF GRACE

My college-aged children arrived home abruptly last March, and have barely left the house since. It's been hard, but we made the best of it: family movie nights, ping pong tournaments and, especially, hiking.

My daughter Abbey, 21, is always game to accompany me on a new trail. For both of us, hiking is a break from phones, politics and the pandemic, and it's a great chance to build a new mother-daughter connection. I hope the day comes—soon—when she can get back to her "real life" but I'll always be grateful for this time together.

I hope you are finding companions for your wandering through nature, or are treasuring the time alone—both are so valuable.

BNRC has been working with a local Berkshires organization, BRIDGE, to gain a deeper understanding of the issues around diversity, equity and inclusion. I was delighted to hear that BRIDGE brought a group of families to one of our reserves as part of their summer Happiness Toolbox program—details on page 5.

A call came in a few weeks ago after a heavy rainstorm from a volunteer in Lenox who noticed a torrent of red efts migrating across the road at Parsons Marsh. Many were getting run over, so she and a friend spent the afternoon

rescuing them. They counted nearly a thousand dead on the road, but saved at least that many. Learn more about wildlife on BNRC reserves on page 4 and be sure to let us know what you are seeing on the trails.

Just as this issue was going to press, we learned that Don MacGillis, long-time BNRC supporter and Board member since 2018, died in a hiking accident on Mount Katahdin. We will have a full appreciation of his tremendous contributions to BNRC and the Berkshires in a future publication. We are grieving his loss and send our love and support to his wife, Ingrid, and children, Alec and Lucy.

Thank you for your overwhelming support of BNRC during this incredibly challenging time. This Landkeepers Report is also our Generosity Report (covering 18 months because we changed our fiscal year)—I hope you are as proud of what you have made possible as I am!

Thank you!

—Jenny Hansell
President

jhansell@bnrc.org

New Trails + Gorgeous Autumn Weather = You Getting Outside More

Make some memories in the weeks ahead!

This year, we all learned anew how essential the outdoors is to our mental and physical health. BNRC staff worked tirelessly all spring and summer to open new trails and create more accessibility. Now is the perfect time to find your next adventure. Here are five trails—newly opened and old favorites—to explore.



HOOSAC RANGE | North Adams

A three-mile-long ridge trail (six miles round trip) atop the Berkshires' northeastern wall, Hoosac Range includes several dramatic vistas, including the trail's Spruce Hill destination. A much shorter hike, 1.6 miles round trip, leads to Sunset Rock, which has spectacular views overlooking North Adams.

Spruce Hill: Difficult | Sunset Rock: Moderate | Adjacent to 2350 Mohawk Trail

PARSONS MARSH | Lenox

Saunter through woodlands and wetlands near the heart of Lenox Village. The accessible* hard-pack and boardwalk of this 2/3 mile round-trip, out-and-back path make it possible for everyone to get some crisp fall air, see the season's colors, and look for wildlife.

Easy | 170 Under Mountain Road

**Also find accessible trails at Old Mill Trail in Dalton, and Thomas & Palmer Brook in Great Barrington (re-opening October 2020).*

THE BOULDERS | Dalton, Pittsfield, Lanesborough

Located at the heart of Berkshire County's population center, the 645 acres of The Boulders provide more than six miles of trails plus the dramatic boulders that give the area its name and offer a vista to the west. The trails lend themselves to hiking, biking, hunting, jogging, dog walking, and—if autumn snow flies—cross-country skiing. Among the trail options is an easy 0.5-mile heart-healthy loop near the Gulf Road trailhead.

Trails Easy to Moderate | Gulf Road in Dalton

STEADMAN POND | Monterey

If you want to throw down a blanket for cider donuts and thermos-top tea next to a picturesque pond at the foot of autumn woods, this is your spot. From the parking area, stroll just 0.2 miles down to the water. The surrounding 800+ acres are part of this reserve. You are welcome to explore the woods. But if you venture into the forest, be mindful of hunting season—there aren't any formal trails (blaze orange hat and vest recommended).

Easy | Tyringham Road (just south of the Monterey/Tyringham town border)

ALFORD SPRINGS | Alford

This big-woods reserve allows for short to all-day adventures from its three trailheads. The new Saddle Trail starts from the parking area on West Road, winds through hemlock

forests and past old stone walls and paddocks, and takes you past a picturesque view of Tom Ball Mountain and the bucolic farmland below, just 0.3 miles from start (gradual climb). The full Saddle Trail is 1.0 miles one-way; the Mother Loop and Father Loop, found off of Mountain Road further south, offer 2.4-mile and 4.3-mile options—the latter with views of Mount Greylock on a clear day.

Saddle Trail: Moderate | West Road Mother Loop: Moderate | Old Village Road Father Loop: Difficult | Mountain Road

Find a complete list of BNRC reserves at bnrc.org/reserves. Or use the BNRC Berkshire Trails app, available for Android and iOS. Donors like you make all these places, trails, and the app free for everyone. 🍂





Red fox at Mahanna Cobble

SMILE, YOU'RE ON CANID CAMERA

Wildlife cameras provide vital information and intriguing scenes

Ever want to sneak a peek at a bobcat or a bear going about its daily business in the wild? Berkshire Natural Resources Council

staff and volunteers have been using motion-sensitive cameras on reserves to provide an inside glimpse of animals' lives, and a better understanding of who is seeking food, water, and shelter on the land. That knowledge can help us make better decisions on how to manage the habitat and protect the creatures we so enjoy watching.

The cameras are strategically placed on game trails (identifiable routes through vegetation and used by many animals), crossing points like fallen logs over water bodies, and areas with animal sign like tracks or scat.

In between hours of squirrel scenes are occasional thrilling glimpses of iconic mammals of the area: skittish coyotes, white-tailed deer of all ages and sizes, lone bobcats, and spirited fox. Opossums, New England's only marsupial, are a fun sight to see too, along with their waddling comrades, the porcupine and raccoon.

Other than turkey, it's pretty rare to get good footage of birds. On occasion we'll get lucky and see a few moments of an interested wood thrush or busy woodpecker in the viewshed, but most bird activity is auditory—their songs come through loud and clear.

See and hear for yourself by checking out the wildlife camera footage on BNRC's YouTube Channel ([youtube.com/user/BNRCvideos/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/BNRCvideos/videos))!

If you're interested in experiential learning about Berkshire wildlife, consider joining the Wildlife Tracking Club with the Berkshire Environmental Action Team. 🐾

BNRC and You Expand Hoosac Range Reserve for Wildlife

North Berkshire County has more conserved land thanks to a recent acquisition in North Adams

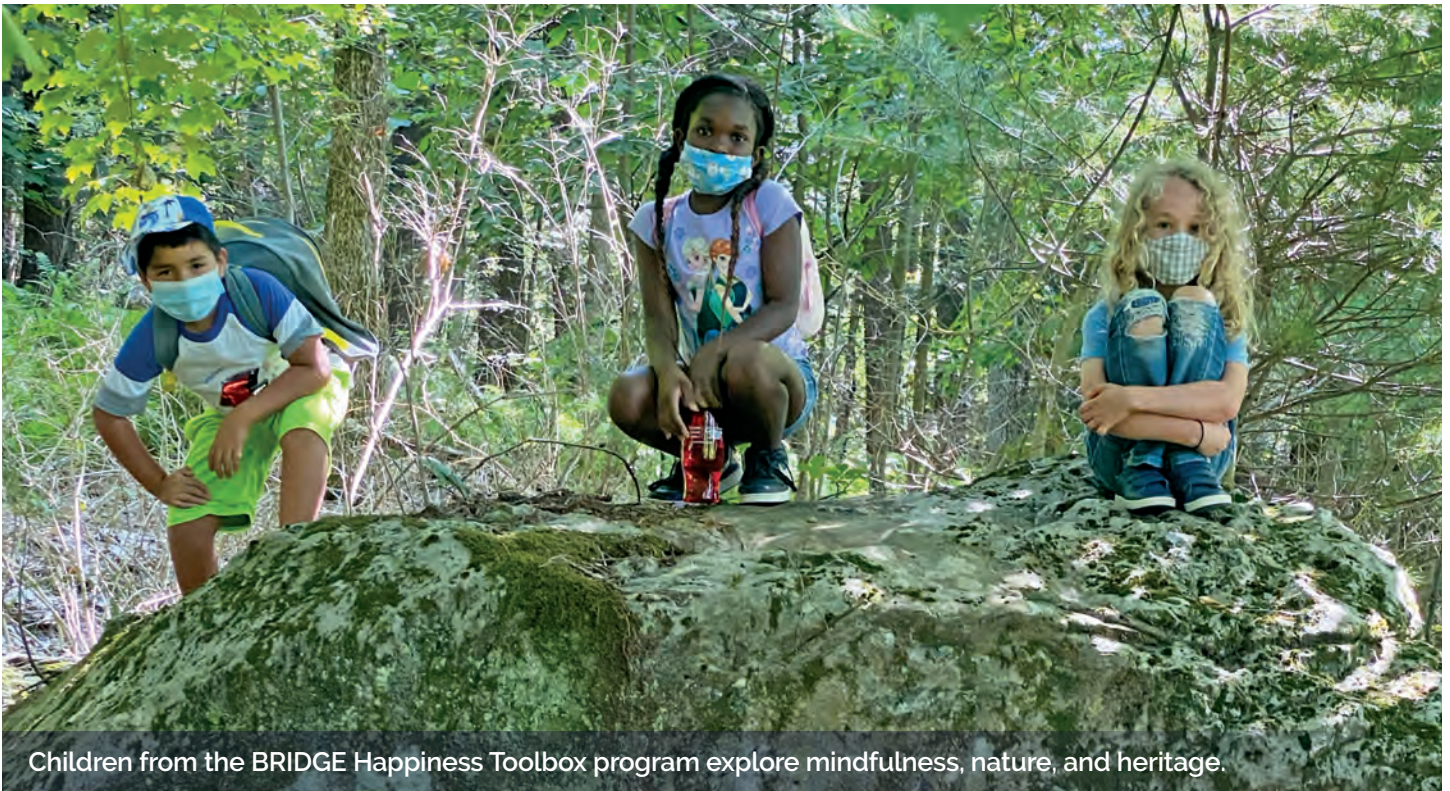
Connectivity between pieces of land is essential for the resiliency of plant and animal species as the climate changes. A new addition to BNRC's Hoosac Range helps accomplish that goal.

In June of 2020, BNRC continued its partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation in conserving 45 additional acres in North Adams, bolstering the size of BNRC's Hoosac Range reserve to nearly 1,000 acres.

Like the rest of the reserve, these two parcels, purchased from a logging company, have many delightful natural features. No BNRC trails lead directly to the new parcels—steep slopes make the land difficult to access—but the intrepid explorer will find a deep hemlock-lined ravine, large rocky outcrops, and mature upland forest crisscrossed by old logging roads. DCR holds a conservation restriction over the property, while BNRC holds the fee interest, managing the land and creating public access.

For maps, photos and more information, visit the Hoosac Range reserve webpage at [bnrc.org](https://www.bnrc.org) by linking through the Top Berkshire Hikes list. 🐾





Children from the BRIDGE Happiness Toolbox program explore mindfulness, nature, and heritage.

FINDING HAPPINESS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE AT THOMAS & PALMER BROOK

As the stress and anxiety of the pandemic settled in last spring, Gwendolyn VanSant was looking for a place to get outside and find some peaceful solitude. She lives not far from Thomas & Palmer Brook reserve in Great Barrington, and took a walk there one day.

VanSant, the founder and CEO of BRIDGE, noticed the land acknowledgement sign, written in the Stockbridge Munsee language, at the reserve, and realized that it would be a great place to bring the families enrolled in BRIDGE's summer program, called Happiness Toolbox. She asked BRIDGE's educator, Stephanie Wright, to share the history of the local Munsee through the Happiness Toolbox Berkshire Legends class in preparation for one of their five socially distanced excursions.

"Teaching the children to honor the history and individuals that came before us was essential to adding depth to our summer experience,"

says VanSant. "We practiced mindfulness of listening to the land, nature and the voices through the words of ancestors. We admired the resilience of the mushrooms, berries and small animals on the reserve and related it to our own resilience in the time of the pandemic."

The program builds positive character traits such as resilience through creativity, play and skill-building—everything from clown workshops to beekeeping and much more. This year most of the program was conducted on Zoom, so the leaders were glad to have the chance to bring the families—children from 3-12, high-school leaders and some parents—to BNRC's reserve.

The visit focused on two main themes, said one of the group leaders, Maya Richards: storytelling and connecting to and honoring the land. Bands like the Stockbridge Munsee tell stories to learn more about their past or connect

with people who have different experiences, and the group shared their own stories. Seeing the plants that grew on the trail, like red clover and thyme, some of the women talked about how they used similar herbs back in Mexico to create remedies, and Stephanie Wright spoke of family traditions.

Richards, a yoga teacher, led a mindfulness activity with yoga poses, breathing exercises, and an expression of gratitude to the land, the ancestors who lived there, and the non-human inhabitants who live there now.

The students made handmade books and rubbings of interesting things they found, so that they would "take only pictures, leave only footprints."

"We were so appreciative that we could use the space," Richards said, "and find the human contact we were all craving while also feeling such gratitude for the land." 🌿

**GENEROSITY REPORT:
January 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020**



The Berkshires Thank You!
Here's what you've done since 2019:

Protected another **1,001** acres in Berkshire County; land in conservation through BNRC now totals over **23,000** acres of wildlife habitat and natural beauty—not including assists to other town, city, and state conservation efforts

Cared for over **60** miles of trails, keeping **56** BNRC reserves open and safe for everyone

Offered **36** free guided outings, enjoyed by hundreds of folks who love the Berkshires

Served **609** learners through **52** classroom, library, and community programs that encourage all generations to be stewards of these lands and waters

Volunteered **1,045** hours across **32** workdays, helping neighbors connect, building some amazing new trails, blazing routes, pulling invasives, and so much more

Provided **11,476** trail maps to folks at BNRC reserves, as well as **30,000** Go Wild regional map brochures across our **32** towns and cities

Created **7** internships to lighten the endless work of Berkshire conservation, and launch some purposeful careers while at it!

Opened **1** new accessible trail, at Thomas & Palmer Brook in Great Barrington. Refurbished another at Old Mill Trail in Dalton. Along with Parsons Marsh in Lenox, BNRC now offers three such trails so everyone can enjoy the serenity of nature, for free.

Continued updating and offering the BNRC Berkshire Trails App for free, keeping reserve and trail information at anyone's fingertips

Tribute Gifts

In Honor of Mariah Auman, from William & Elizabeth Auman
 In Honor of Bill Barrett, from Alexander & Jill Johnson
 In Honor of Judy Bronston, from Susan Griffiths
 In Honor of Terri Campbell-Daoust, from Ruth Campbell
 In Honor of Rachel Fletcher, from Alexander & Jill Johnson
 In Honor of Mackenzie Greer, from Judy Condron, Jodi Joseph
 In Honor of Jenny Hansell, from Sandy Hansell
 In Honor of Melinda Leyden, from Ben Russell
 In Honor of Kate Meyer, from Sue Craig
 In Honor of Lynn Meyers, from Sharon Metz
 In Honor of Mindy Miraglia, from Jane T. Brady-Close
 In Honor of Micah Mortali, from Tad & Trudy Ames
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 In Honor of Karen Ross, from Elisa Ross
 In Honor of Elizabeth Sacks, from Douglas Sacks
 In Honor of Alan & Jo Samuels, from Matthew Osborn
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 In Honor of George Wislocki, from Andy & Pam Breslin, David Chapman

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 In Memory of David & Martha Germain, from Mary Dunn
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 In Memory of Sibyl Gould, from Doug Gould
 In Memory of Bill Graulty, from LeVaun Bell Graulty
 In Memory of Linda Hammond, from Mary & Michael Lawrence
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 In Memory of David Kaplan, from Lynne Kaplan
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 In Memory of Eli Katz, The Morning Mountain Man, from David Sotnick
 In Memory of Kerry & Grayson Memorial Fund, from Lauren Pellegrino
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 In Memory of Mary MacDarby, from Sandra Preston
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 In Memory of Elaine M. Strauss, from Peter & Joanna Strauss
 In Memory of Bob Thieriot, from Pamela Winslow
 In Memory of Tyson, from Bertha Connelley
 In Memory of Thomas Robert Webster, from Lori & David Alessio
 In Memory of Marlayne Weinberg, from Adam Weinberg

Schist & Marble Society

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 Susan Crofut
 George Darey *
 Laurily Epstein
 Rachel G. Fletcher
 Philip and Lucy Foster *
 E. Bayard Halsted *
 Fay J. Henry *
 Nancy E. King
 Wendy T. Linscott
 Rick & Nancy Richardson
 Brian Rod
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 Syd Smithers
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 Edward & Marsha Weiner
 * *deceased*

50+ years

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 Fay Henry
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40-49 years

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 The Feigenbaum Foundation
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 Ashley & Debbie Smith

30-39 years

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 Ginny Akabane
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 Sibylle Baier
 Betsy C. Bean
 Michael Belknap &
 Martha Burke-Hennessy
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 The van Itallie Foundation
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 Robert & Lee Watroba
 Williams Outing Club
 David & Sherri Wilson

10-19 years

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5-9 years
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Let's be honest: we'd be sunk without volunteers. Over the years, BNRC supporters have conserved tens of thousands of acres. Fifty-six reserves are open to everyone—for free—for hiking, biking, fishing, birding, horseback riding, strolling with your dog, and so much more. There are over 60 miles of trails to keep clear. There are parking areas and pull-offs to keep open, clean, and safe. There are water bars to build, blowdowns to move, paths to blaze, kiosk maps to restock, invasives to pull. All this happens in large part thanks to the 200+ volunteers who help make BNRC everything it can be. Thank you! If you'd like to **learn more about volunteering with BNRC**, contact Mariah at mauman@bnrc.org.

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Do any of these ways of helping conserve the Berkshires make sense for you?

Transfer appreciated stock: Donating appreciated stocks to the work done through BNRC is a high-impact, tax-savvy way to protect the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Berkshires.

Go to freewill.com/stocks/bnrc to donate stock online.

Give directly from your IRA: If you are 70 ½ or older and have a traditional IRA, you can make a tax-free donation directly from your IRA, regardless of whether or not you itemize items on your tax return.

Visit freewill.com/qcd/bnrc to get started.

Leave a gift to the Berkshire outdoors in your will: You can forever be part of what we do together through BNRC by using the Free Will writing tool. It's an easy way to provide for the people and causes you care about the most, and fuel conservation in the Berkshires for generations to come. Visit freewill.com/bnrc to write a will for free—there's no obligation to name BNRC in your will to use this service.

Questions? Contact Rich Montone at rmontone@bnrc.org, or 413-499-0596 x1021.



The above is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be considered, tax, legal, or accounting advice.



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Dozens of BNRC donors find that monthly gifts are an easy way to make a significant contribution to Berkshire conservation over the course of a year. Some say the set-it-and-forget-it nature of being a monthly supporter makes for a fun moment at year-end or tax time to realize how much they were able to put into preserving open space, wildlife habitat, local agriculture, and free access to the outdoors for everyone. If this sounds like a great way for you to make the contribution you'd like to give to all who love the Berkshires, please visit bnrc.org/contribute and choose the "monthly donation" option. It takes just a few quick taps or clicks to make a lasting difference for so many.

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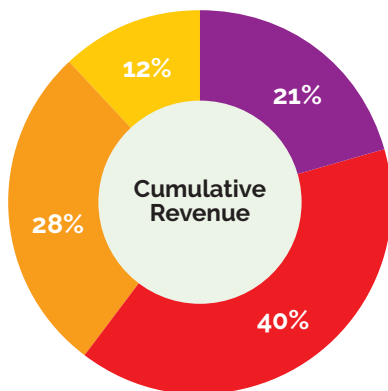
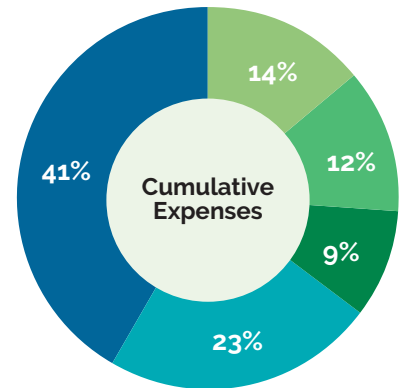
Income and Expenses

January 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

This report covers two fiscal years. In 2019, BNRC changed its fiscal year from a January – December year to July – June. FY19 covers the six-month period January 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019, and FY20 covers July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Expenses

	FY2019	FY2020
Public Programs	\$ 167,035	\$ 296,534
Administration	\$ 155,932	\$ 252,914
Fundraising	\$ 89,494	\$ 221,970
Stewardship and Public Access.....	\$ 330,089	\$ 436,410
Land Conservation.....	\$ 475,672	\$ 887,812
Total	\$1,218,222	\$2,095,640



Revenue

	FY2019	FY2020
Unrestricted Donations	\$ 150,781	\$ 524,060
Reserves and Earned Income	\$ 600,504	\$ 710,653
Project Donations and Grants.....	\$ 356,825	\$ 552,210
Government Awards.....	\$ 85,000	\$ 308,717
Total.....	\$1,218,222	\$2,095,640

This summary is drawn from internal accounting. Audited financial statements will be available after December 15, 2020. Totals include operating and capital expenses. For a copy of BNRC audited financial statements please email rgawthrop@bnrc.org



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Natural Resources Council

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