

Notes from the Hosmers

Summer 2011



Little Hosmer Frontage Protected! *By Tracy Zschau, Vermont Land Trust*

Mimi Grosser has been coming to the shores of Little Hosmer Pond since the 1950s when she and her late husband, George, first purchased property near the pond. This special place is near and dear to her heart, and Mimi recently put her commitment to the future and health of Little Hosmer into action by donating a permanent conservation easement on her 9.4 acre parcel to Vermont Land Trust (VLT). The conservation easement ensures that 1,700 feet of undeveloped frontage on the pond, not far from the Little Hosmer boat access, will remain forever wooded and free of development. The conservation easement leaves out a small area around each of her camps, but preserves



a critical wooded buffer along the entire frontage. The conserved property remains in her ownership and can be bought and sold like other lands, but the perpetual restrictions prohibit certain future uses by her or future owners that would be detrimental to the natural resources on the property. Vermont Land Trust worked with Mimi to create a conservation easement specially tailored to a waterfront parcel and its unique qualities.

Mimi was one of the first landowners to contact Vermont Land Trust about conservation options when VLT, in collaboration with local residents, launched the Hosmer Ponds Watershed Initiative in 2007. Says

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Holiday Hill Memories *By Nancy Moran*

(Editor's note: Windridge tennis camp was originally a girls' camp called Holiday Hill and was founded in 1946. Windridge was recently purchased by the Craftsbury Outdoor Center and will continue as a summer camp for boys and girls.)

On a steamy early July night in New York City, Randi, Sandy, and Nancy - that's me - are standing in a scrum of little girls on a platform in Penn Station, feeling very grown up as we wait to board the Montreal Express. We hug our parents. "Have fun, brush your teeth, write every week." It's 1955 and we're off to spend the summer at Holiday Hill, a girls' camp in the far away hills of Craftsbury Common, Vermont.

We fill up a sleeper car, but we're too excited to close our eyes. We giggle and sing camp songs:

Oh, it's H-O-L-I-D-A-Y and H-I-double L
When it's family time we'll all feel fine
At this old camp of mine.
Oh, for Holiday, high upon our hill
New friends we'll make and hikes we'll take
At happy Holiday Hill.

By dawn, tired but happy, we're hundreds of miles from the Quaker school we attend on the North Shore of Long Island. The train pulls into Waterbury, we get off, collect our foot lockers, board an old wooden bus, and drive north. We pull up in front of

a hilltop lodge where we're greeted by Miss Lowell and Miss Willard, the camp directors. Jim Moffatt, who worked as a camp maintenance man, remembers them being tough but fair. "You didn't argue with Miss Lowell or Miss Willard," Jim says. "They were the bosses. But the pay was always there on Friday nights." Jim and Sonny Sweatt, the maintenance chief, called them "Miss Holiday and Miss Hill" or "The Girls", but not to their faces.

I was 11 years old that first summer at camp. How much of this do I actually remember? We passed through Mill Village, where I live now, on hayrides to the Common, but I don't recall the

store on the corner or if the mills were still standing. But I remember every board and stone of the camp. Ten years ago, after I moved back here, I walked down Lost Nation Road to Windridge, the tennis camp that Holiday Hill had changed into in the 70's, complete with a dozen courts built by

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The Hosmer Ponds Watershed Initiative

Judy Davis
Judy Geer
Chelsea Little
Nancy Moran
Diane Morgan
Steve Wright

Call Eric Hanson 586-8065
for more information about
HPWI.



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Mimi, "My family and I have loved this beautiful little lake for many years. Part of what we cherish is the shoreline, where the woods, the fields and the water create the sense of peace and calm that one always feels on Little Hosmer. Anything we can do to preserve this is worth doing."

Taking time to ensure that the conservation easement protected the key aspects of her property, as well as being in line with her and her family's goals for the land, was critical to Mimi and something that is very common in VLT's experience with landowners. "Conserving your land is a big decision," says Tracy Zschau, North-

east Kingdom Director. "Getting good legal and tax advice as well as family agreement and buy-in is critical and worth taking time for."

Donating a conservation easement in 2011 ensures that Mimi will be able to take advantage of a special tax incentive, which expands the federal income tax deduction associated with such a gift (see following article). The Hosmer Ponds Fund at Vermont Land Trust, which is dedicated to facilitating conservation around Little and Big Hosmer Ponds, covered all the costs associated with the conservation of the Grosser property. The Hosmer Ponds Fund is available to offset the costs of conservation around the Ponds – including associated landowner legal and appraisal expenses. This provides an added incentive for landowners, which does not exist in many other places. Mimi is the

second landowner in the area to conserve her land as part of this local effort: Elinor and George Osborn donated a conservation easement on their land on the Black River, near Big Hosmer Pond, to VLT in the summer of 2009. The Osborn property includes a Northern White Cedar Swamp on the Black River and a section of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center ski trail.

Mimi's actions will positively impact water quality, wildlife habitat and the scenic beauty of Little Hosmer. We will all enjoy the benefits of her commitment to this special place. Thanks Mimi! ***

About the Vermont Land Trust

The Vermont Land Trust is a statewide, member-supported, nonprofit land conservation organization. Since 1977, the Vermont Land Trust



has permanently conserved more than 1,600 parcels of land covering 506,000 acres, or about eight percent of the private, undeveloped land in the state. The conserved land includes more than 700 working farms, hundreds of thousands of acres of productive forestland, and numerous parcels of community lands. This conservation work changes the lives of families, invigorates farms, launches new businesses, maintains scenic vistas, encourages recreational opportunities, and fosters a renewed sense of community. For more information, contact: Tracy Zschau, Northeast Kingdom Director, Vermont Land Trust, PO Box 427, St. Johnsbury, VT05819, (802) 748-6089,

Special Tax Incentive for Donating Conservation Easements

A conservation easement permanently protects your land from development. The land continues to be privately owned but carries with it protective restrictions that are forever upheld by the Vermont Land Trust. An easement can be used to protect conservation values such as agricultural or forestry resources, rare plants or wildlife habitat, scenic value, or perhaps to ensure public access. Easements are flexible and are tailored to a family's needs.

An easement gift is considered a charitable donation and may provide an income tax deduction. In restricting the overall value of the land with a conservation easement, a landowner may also reduce the total value of his or her taxable estate for estate tax purposes.

Exciting news to share is that as part of the 2010 Tax Relief Act, Congress extended an additional incentive for conservation easements donated in 2010-2011. Conservation easement donors are allowed to deduct up to 50% (instead of 30%) of their adjusted gross income (AGI) in the year of the gift, and may carry over any unused deduction for up to 15 (instead of 5) years.

Here's an Example: *Under the previous rules, a landowner with an AGI of \$50,000 a year who donated a conservation easement on their land, valued at \$400,000, could take a \$15,000 income tax deduction in the year of the donation and \$15,000 per year for the next five years. His total deduction would be \$90,000. The remaining \$310,000 would in effect be lost.*

The new rules allow that landowner to deduct \$25,000 in the year of the donation and then \$25,000 per year for an additional 15 years (assuming his income remains the same). In this case, the deduction would total \$400,000, the entire value of the conservation easement.

For more information about how this may apply in your particular situation, you should consult your financial or legal advisor. If you would like to explore conservation options for your land, contact Tracy Zschau of Vermont Land Trust at 748-6089 or tracy@vlt.org.



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Sonny. It was Labor Day, quiet, everyone had gone home. While Tiger, my golden retriever, sniffed around for tennis balls, I stared at the cabins. They were so small! How did eight girls fit in one? The washhouses were the same, too, they still smelled slightly musty, but now they said "Girls" and "Boys".

We were always busy, but we also had a fair amount of freedom. Mornings after breakfast we headed to the riding ring. Noontimes we played tennis on the hilltop court. Afternoons we ran down to the lake and swam from the small sand beach out to three floats. We rowed, canoed, and sailed. Older girls could take rowboats out past the Point, catch little sunnies, stare down at deep mysterious underwater rock shelves. We climbed Mt. Mansfield and Mt. Washington, put on a variety show in town, marched in the Old Home Day parade, sang in the church choir.

The days took on a rhythm. We woke at seven, washed up and, as the breakfast bell rang, climbed the hill to the lodge. Mail call was followed by lunch and dinner by bingo and Chinese checkers. We had scavenger hunts and caught frogs; sometimes we just sat on the ground and chewed grass. We slept out under the stars, told ghost stories, learned not to be afraid of the dark, listened to crickets. At the end of meals we put our arms on each others' shoulders, swung to the right, swung to the left and sang:

Oh, who owns Vermont
Oh, who owns Vermont
Oh, who owns Vermont the people say aie aie
Why, we own Vermont
Why, we own Vermont
H-O-L-I-D-A-Y and H-I-double L

We felt we did own it, but were warned never to sing that song away from camp.

It all seems so long ago. We had bobbed hair, white shirts, green shorts, brown leather shoes, no cell phones, no Internet, no helicopter parents. The phone was for emergencies only. We wrote letters to keep in touch. At the end of the summer, when the leaves were turning red, our moms and dads arrived to drive us back to the flatlands. The evening before we left, we lit candles and sent them floating on the lake, cried, promised we'd see each other next summer. For a treat, my parents and I spent a night at the Craftsbury Inn. I remember looking at myself in a full-length mirror for the first time in weeks. I was taller, tanner, thinner and I'd grown breasts.

Today kids get sent away for a week or two, no more. What good did a whole summer at camp do us? We weren't on the athlete track, training for a junior national team. We didn't learn Russian or photography or grow organic vegetables. Today, what would we write on a college admissions essay? "I always need quiet time, I get peopled out," Randi says. "We all learned about being happy on our own." I think I discovered what Mole learned in *The Wind in the*

Willows: "As the ripening summer moved onward...he learnt to swim and to row, and entered into the joy of running water: and with his ear to the reed stems he caught, at intervals, something of what the wind went whispering so constantly among them."

I'm still not afraid of the dark. But sometimes when I'm bothered by adult stuff and can't sleep, I reach out for Sam, my black lab, and grab his paw. It smells of crushed leaves and new grass and all the birds he's hunted. Outside I hear water lapping against the shore, and I fall back to sleep thinking of those long slow childhood summers on Hosmer Pond. ***



Both images in this article are from Holiday Hill promotional material circa 1950 provided by Margie Ramsdell.

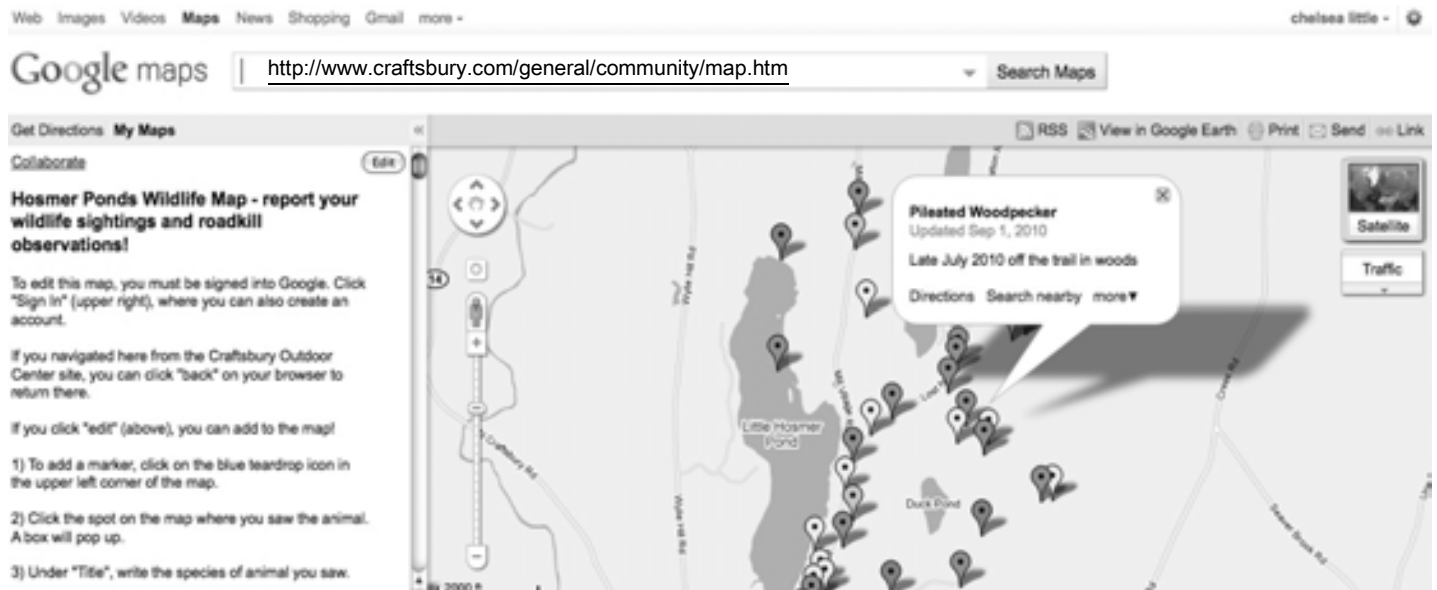
Windridge Becomes Hosmer Point *by Judy Geer*

When the Craftsbury Outdoor Center got wind of the fact that the Windridge property might be put up for sale, we were immediately interested for all of the following reasons:

- ◆ It's a lovely piece of property that includes both significant lakefront as well as the high open fields that are visible as you drive past on Lost Nation Rd.
- ◆ It's contiguous with Outdoor Center property (across the road)
- ◆ Craftsbury ski trails cross the property
- ◆ The purchase fits the third component of our mission, which is to protect and manage the surrounding land, lake and trails.
- ◆ We have rowed past the camp almost daily during

summers for the last 12 years, often hearing the cheering and singing of the "polar bear plunge" as we go by.

The hard part was choosing a new name for the camp, as we were not allowed to keep the Windridge name. We considered going back to Holiday Hill, but felt that it might not resonate with the potential campers of today. After lots of brainstorming, we finally settled on Craftsbury Outdoor Camp at Hosmer Point, in honor of the lake that gives it so much of its character. The purchase was completed in December 2010, and we are in the midst of planning for the re-opening of the camp this summer. The website should be live by the time this goes to press: www.hosmerpoint.com. Please spread the word!



Wildlife Mapping - Upload Your Sightings *by Chelsea Little*

Maybe you've heard about a fun new way to track the animals you see in your backyard--the Craftsbury Wildlife Map! This interactive, online map was inspired by the Staying Connected Initiative, a multi-agency project which studies and preserves important wildlife corridors from New York to Maine and Massachusetts to Quebec. The area around the Hosmers is an important piece in this large habitat block, which explains why our community is home to so many different kinds of wildlife.

Since the map went "live" last summer, it has received over 5,000 views, which is pretty cool. What will be even cooler is if you add your wildlife sightings to the map! The more information we have, the better we will understand that our lovely part of Vermont really is a wildlife haven. Plus, you might learn some new things to look for!

You can find the map on the Craftsbury Outdoor Center website:

<http://www.craftsbury.com/general/community/map.htm>

To get to a full-sized version of the map which you can edit, click the link that says "[View Hosmer Ponds Wildlife Map in a larger map](#)"

How do you use the map? If you just want to look at it, it's easy -- click and drag the map to move it around, and use the zoom-in/zoom-out scale on the left to make it bigger or smaller. Clicking on one of the markers will tell you more about your neighbors' sightings.

If you want to add a marker -- and you do! -- it's not much harder.

First, you'll have to sign in to google. If you don't already have a google account, set one up -- there are lots of cool things you can do with google; it's easy and they won't spam you. Then, click "edit" in the description bar on the left, and you're off to the races.

There are easy-to-follow directions on how to add markers with your own wildlife sightings on a sidebar next to the map. Since the instructions are there, here are a few more things you can do with the map.



First of all, you can change the background by clicking in the upper right-hand corner. If you click "satellite", the background of the map will change to aerial images of Craftsbury and Albany, which will help you visualize where the animals are (it can also help you place your marker in the correct place -- instead of just roads, you can see the boundaries between fields and forests, and if you zoom in enough, you can even see trails).

If you want to go one step further, you can see the map in three dimensions. When you have clicked the "edit" button, then in the light-blue bar along the top of the map you will see an option for "View in Google Earth". If you have Google Earth downloaded, you can add our map points to the globe. By changing the angle of your view, you can see the hills and valleys and the markers nestled within them.

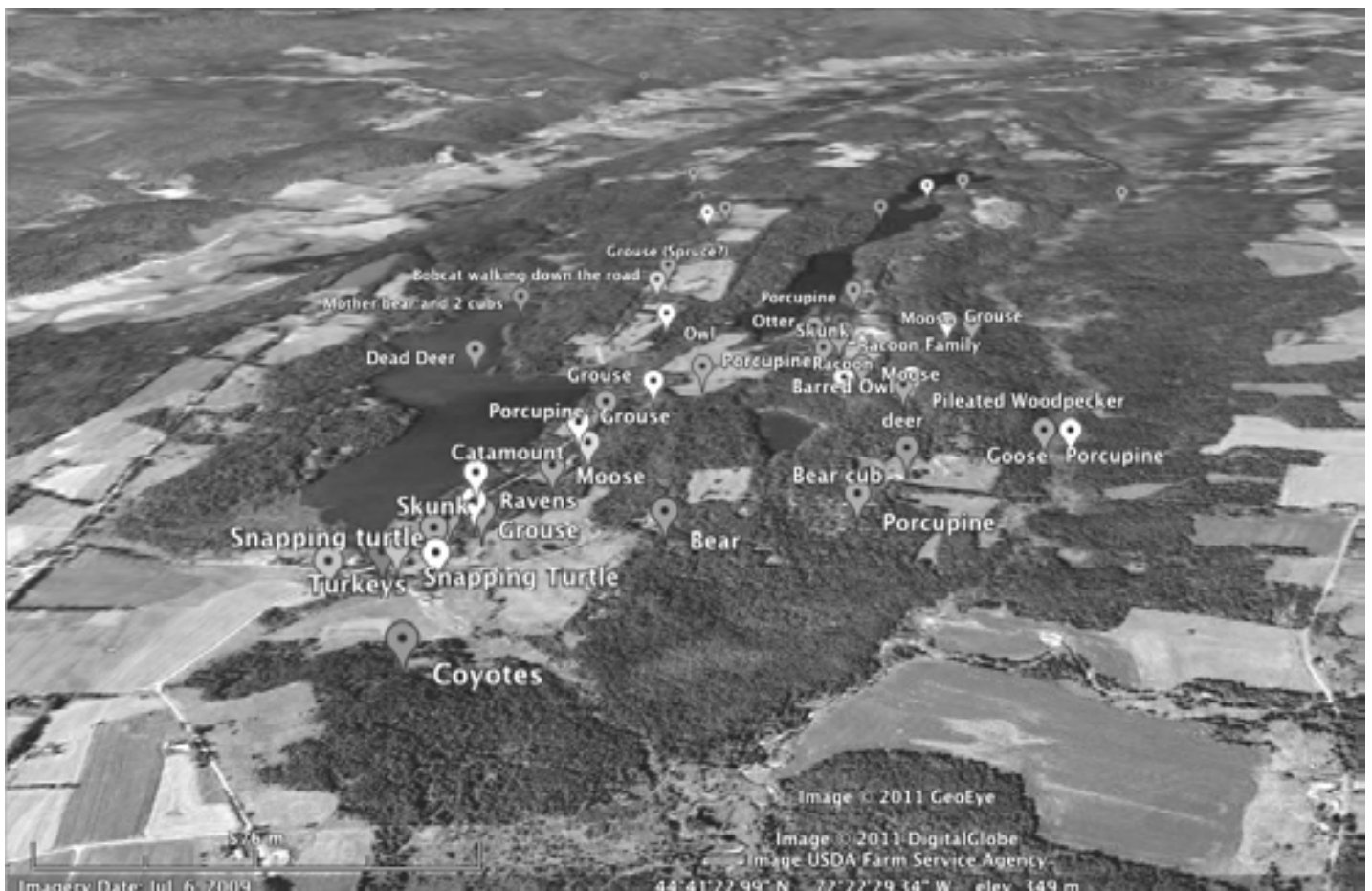
This is a great tool to share our stories and learn more about what's going on around the Hosmers! We hope you'll enjoy exploring the map. ***

Bald Eagles at a Glance

- The bald eagle is the second largest bird of prey in North America, with a wingspan of up to 6 feet.
- The bald eagle was listed as a federally endangered species from 1973-2007.
- DDT was the primary cause of the species' decline in North America.
- Recovery efforts included reintroduction, breeding and wintering habitat protection, and the banning of DDT.
- Bald eagles breed near water bodies where they build large nests under the forest canopy.
- The bald eagle's breeding season starts in early March in Vermont, when eggs are laid. Young hatch in mid-late April and fledge 12 weeks later.
- Vermont was the last state in the U.S. to have breeding bald eagles after recovery efforts began in the 1970's.
- Bald eagles remain listed as an endangered species in Vermont; a recovery plan setting numeric population goals for the state has recently been approved.



- Current threats to bald eagles are contaminants such as mercury and lead, human disturbance of nesting sites, habitat loss, predation and inclement weather.
- There were 9 territorial pairs of eagles in Vermont in 2010.

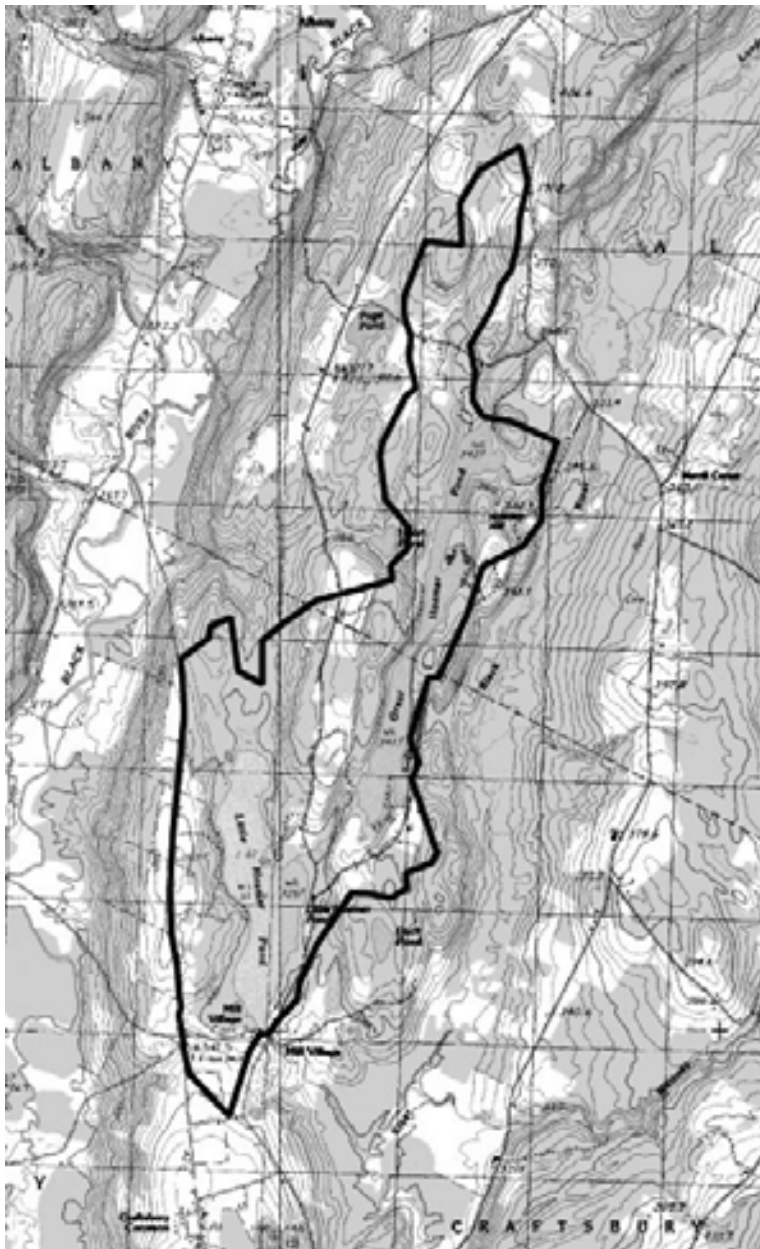


What is a Watershed? *by Ross Morgan*

John Wesley Powell wrote that a watershed was *"that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community"*. Many decades ago when I studied snow hydrology and watershed analysis, we were given the following definition: "A watershed is an area of land and water that drains through a common point." A common point can be a dam on a lake, the mouth of a river, or a point along a stream. The area of a watershed is determined by where you place the common point of drainage.

Let us look at an example by placing the common point of drainage at the dam on Little Hosmer Pond, then the area of land whose waters drain through that point is the Hosmer Ponds Watershed; both Hosmer Ponds are in; Craftsbury Academy

Woodlot is in, as are many fields, woods, swamps, gardens, homes, camps and lawns. Out in the extremities of this watershed to the north, a small stream flows from south east of Albany Center past Coach Works Farm into the north end of Big Hosmer Pond, and this is a part of the watershed being defined by the point on Little Hosmer Pond Dam. To the west of Big Hosmer, the waters of Page Pond and Heart Pond merge, and flow westerly over a waterfall, under Wylie Hill Road, into the north-running Black River, so would not be part of the Hosmer Ponds Watershed. At least they are not now--the outlet of these two ponds did flow into the Little Hosmer Watershed for a while after 1822, when Samuel Crafts altered the watershed with dams and ditches to make Big Hosmer, Heart and Page Ponds flow to Little Hosmer. The increase of water flow was an increase in mill power in both Mill Village and in Craftsbury Village, and it could be stored in ponds with dams.



Watch what happens to the watershed size by moving the point of common drainage down the outlet of Little Hosmer Pond about a half mile from the dam, just downstream from where the outlet meets the River. Now the waters that pass through the new common point include the waters of Hartwell Pond, "Bob's Pond", Seaver Brook over by Betty and Bruce Urie's farm, Whitney Brook draining some of the hills of Glover, and the Adam White Brook draining the valley east of Craftsbury Sports Center, plus all the waters that came over the Little Hosmer Pond dam. The further down stream we place the common point, the larger the watershed.

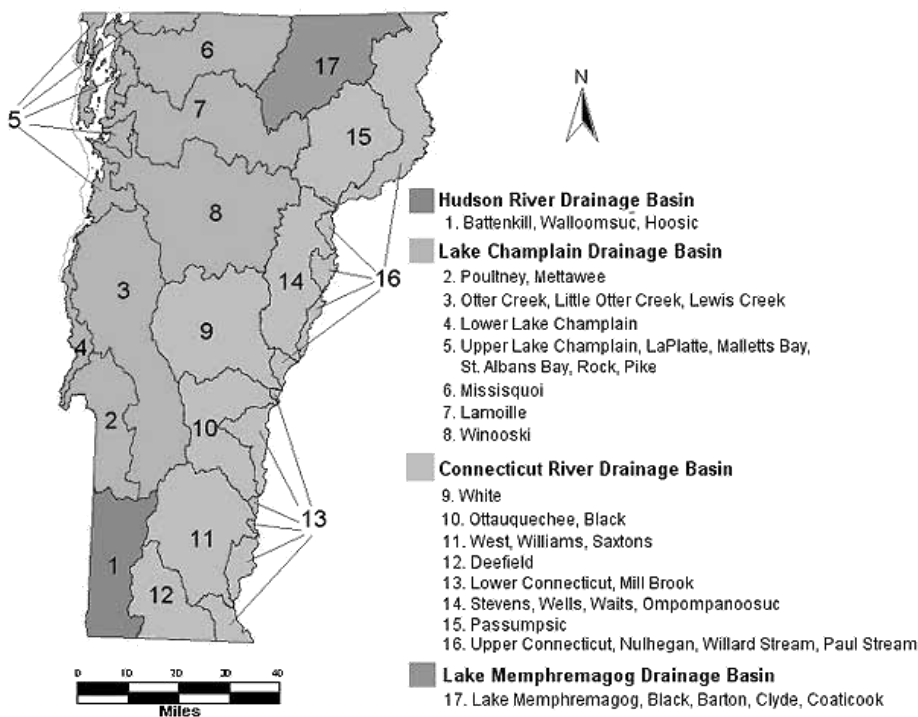
Consider a large watershed nearby—that of the Black River, as defined by a common point of drainage where that river flows into South Bay of Lake Memphremagog. All the land whose waters run into the Black River and pass through that point is its watershed. The Connecticut River watershed is the largest watershed in our area; its common point of drainage is where the river empties into Long Island Sound. Among the very largest are the Amazon and Nile watersheds.

Each watershed can be delineated, meaning that a line can be drawn around it, defining the boundary of what Powell called *"a bounded hydrologic system"*. If we delineated the boundary of Hosmer Ponds watershed, a portion of the delineated line would run right down the middle of Wylie Hill Road. On the west side of that line, water does not flow into the watershed, but on the east side, waters do flow through fields, swamps and forest to reach Little Hosmer, and over the dam. The delineated watershed of the Hosmer Ponds would begin on the dam, run around the edge of the drainage, up around that small brook that runs though Coach Works Farm, and then wiggles down the ridge just east of Windridge and the Outdoor Center, north of Duck Pond and back to the dam.

One of the most studied watersheds in the world is the Sleepers River Watershed in Danville, Vermont, where the

United States government researched annual cycles of water and snow. They built several small dams with stream flow measuring devices, called weirs. The information from these

studies allowed scientists and engineers to develop equations to predict stream flow and predict flood levels. These equations are used throughout the United States and Canada to develop flood



control plans, build levees and predict the peaks of flood. At first, the early equations were not working well, until a Sleepers River scientist made adjustments for the delayed melting of huge snow pack of the northern White Mountains. The equations were used to keep New Orleans safe for decades until the flood came upstream from the Mississippi's common point on the Gulf of Mexico, driven by Hurricane Katrina. For more information about this research facility, run a computer search for Sleepers River Watershed, and select the pubs.usgs.gov/fs/fs-166-99/pdf/fs-166-99.pdf site; there are explanations and photos.

Is it not fascinating that Powell's definition not only ties land and water together in a hydrologic system, but also connects with ecological and social systems? This is the way we need to think about our place in the Hosmer Ponds watershed: its lands and waters, its people and natural communities, no matter where you put the common point of drainage. ***

News from the Craftsbury Outdoor Center

Solar Tracker Facts

Tracking solar panels, such as those at the Outdoor Center, are on average about 40% more efficient than fixed panels. This is because they "track" the sun throughout the course of the day.

The Center's eight panels are expected to produce about 45,000KwH annually or roughly 1/3 of the Center's power needs.

The power produced goes to the Center and the grid. If our trackers make more power than we need, the excess goes into the grid and we get credited for it.

The Center is purchasing its panels through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), since as a non-profit, we were unable to take advantage of the tax credits offered last year. Here's how it works: we pay a small initial fee, the PPA provider takes the tax credits and sells the power to us at a fixed rate for 5 years, after which time we have the option of purchasing the trackers at their fully depreciated value (about 2/3 of initial cost). After that the Center owns the trackers and the power is "free".

The ideal solar location is one that sees about 90% of the available solar radiation. This generally means a good southern exposure without too many trees or other obstructions to the path of the sun in either the east or west.



©NANCY MORAN

Why are the trackers sometimes flat? Each tracker has an anemometer at its top. When wind speeds of over 25 mph are detected, the tracker flattens to minimize any wind damage. The panels are still working when they are flat.

How about snow? Sometimes the snow will slide off by itself; others times it helps to sweep it off. Once the sun begins to hit the tracker, it generates some heat which helps to melt the snow.

What happens if one gets hit by a soccer ball? All Sun Trackers tells us that the trackers will withstand impact from soccer balls, Frisbees, etc....but we'd rather not put them to the test!

You can follow the trackers' production at <http://www.allearthrenewables.com/energy-production-report/detail/229#view=monthly&date=2011-03-01>.

Notes From the Hosmers
c/o Eric Hanson
P.O. Box 22
Craftsbury, VT 05826



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2011 Summer Events

Birding Hike

- ◆ **Saturday, May 28 - 7 a.m.**
- ◆ **Location: Craftsbury Common, Stardust Cafe.**

Join Eric Hanson on a 3-4 mile slow hike looking for spring migrants and early summer arrivals. We'll make our way down the King Farm Road, up the Black River to Mill Village and back to the Common. Some bumpy and rough terrain. Call Eric Hanson 586.8065 for more info.

Bald Eagles Return to Vermont

- ◆ **Thursday, June 23 - 7 p.m.**
- ◆ **Location: Craftsbury Public Library**

John M. Buck, Wildlife Biologist and Migratory Bird Project Leader with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department will be discussing habitat, natural history, and historical perspectives of bald eagles. He will focus on the regulatory measures that have helped bald eagle restoration efforts and provide a status report of bald eagles in Vermont. Co-sponsored with the Craftsbury Public Library.

Mid-Summer Barn Party

- ◆ **Wednesday, July 27 - 5-7 pm**
- ◆ **Location: Nancy Moran's Barn, 468 Mill Village Rd., kitty corner from Little Hosmer Pond boat access**

Celebrate summer, conservation, and our neighbor Mimi Grosser's recent easement on her waterfront land. Meet new & old friends plus members of the Green Racing Project, Small Boat Training Center, Vermont Land Trust, Northern Rivers Land Trust, Craftsbury

Conservation Commission and the Forestry Committee. Food, drink, and fun. Call Nancy 586 - 6937 for more information.

Paddle, Hike, and Bike

- ◆ **Time and date: likely in August—look for posters**
- ◆ **Location: Craftsbury Outdoor Center**

The Craftsbury Outdoor Center has sponsored a community paddle, hike, and bike day in August the past 2 summers. This is a great opportunity to paddle on Big Hosmer, especially if you do not have access to a canoe or kayak. Call the Outdoor Center at 586.7767 for more info.



Other Area Events

Hardwick Trails BirdWalks

Meet at the trailhead in the Hazen Union Parking lot at 7:00 a.m. on Saturdays in May. Walks last approximately 2 hours. All ages and skills are welcome, and trails events are always free. Our leaders are:

- ◆ Marie LaPre-Grabon **Saturday, May 7th**
- ◆ Charlotte Bill **Saturday, May 14th**
- ◆ Gail Johnson **Saturday, May 21st**

Updates can be found on the Hardwick Trails Facebook page, or contact Ron & Norma Wiesen at 472.6517.