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Membership Matters!



# LAND TRUST NEWS

Preserving Open Lands In Our Towns

Spring Newsletter 2025



Kikas Valley Farm

## Help Protect our future landscape... TODAY

**Please note:** All JULT memberships now run on a calendar year from January 1st to December 31st.

**Please sign me up for:**

- Conservator** Membership \$500
- Steward** Membership \$100
- Sponsor** Membership \$50
- Family** Membership \$35
- Individual** Membership \$25
- Student/Senior** Membership \$10
- Lifetime** Membership \$1,000  
*(Beat inflation and avoid renewal notices!)*

**Other Considerations:**

- My employer's matching gift is enclosed.
- Please **do not** send me a "Thank-you" gift.
- I wish to remain anonymous.

**Please contact me regarding:**

- Conservation options for my land
- Making a gift of stock
- Other planned giving opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities:
  - \_\_\_ Fundraising/Events
  - \_\_\_ Office/Administration
  - \_\_\_ Trails/Land Stewardship

**Legacy Planning:**

Please consider JULT gifts that might include a bequest or charitable income gift. Ask an attorney or estate planner about your options.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make **checks** payable to **JULT** and mail to the address below. Or you may **pay by credit card via our website: [www.jult.org](http://www.jult.org)**. All contributions are tax-deductible.

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[www.facebook.com/Jericho-Underhill-Land-Trust](http://www.facebook.com/Jericho-Underhill-Land-Trust)

## SPRING HAPPENINGS

Now is an especially good time to walk our local woods and fields and admire the early beginnings of a changing landscape. Fragile wildflowers poke through the mottled layers of fallen leaves. Piles of snow have quietly released their water treasure, filling nearby streams, wetlands and vernal pools. The winter drought of ice is over and the sound of fresh flowing water fills the air. Gurgling, rumbling, gushing and trickling feed the early wildflowers, the reawakening forest and emerging animal life. Sugarers harvest the sweet drippings of sap just before the hillsides turn green and blossom. The screech of the red-winged blackbird demands our attention and alerts us to the miracle of bird migration. So many of our summer birds will be nesting soon after traveling from Central and South America, warblers, tanagers, Eastern kingbirds, ruby throated hummingbirds, and thrushes are just a few of the species that call Vermont home. How fortunate we are to witness the imperceptible changes of spring when everything becomes new again.



We're on the web: [www.jult.org](http://www.jult.org)

Remember to "Like" us on



## THE FARM UPSTREAM UPDATE

Jake Kornfeld

The first year at The Farm Upstream on Lee River Road has been a wonderful whirlwind. After conserving the land with the incredible support of JULT, the town of Jericho's conservation reserve fund, and the Vermont Land Trust, we've been hard at work turning an old dairy into a diversified organic operation. It was a year of long-term projects investing in the farm's future. We drilled a well, renovated the 1836 post-and-beam farmhouse, and turned the garage into a farm stand many of you visited! We got to know our soils, prepared vegetable fields and planted fruit trees.

Now, with our feet under us, we're planning for next season and looking forward to offering more to the community. We'll start the 2025 season with a spring plant sale and the first of many vegetables in May. We are offering CSA shares this season, and our farm stand will be open with expanded hours.

In the hours surrounding our long list of projects, we've been enjoying and exploring this beautiful piece of land. We found spots to cool off in the river and marveled at a huge patch of gorgeous bloodroot flowers that bloom in the spring. We loved getting to hear from neighbors about their own connections to this place spanning decades.

Thanks to JULT and this Jericho/ Underhill community for helping this journey get under way, we are thrilled to be able to live here and grow good food for you!

You Are Invited! .....

### ANNUAL SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK

Mills Riverside Park  
Meet at the parking area  
May 3, 2025 – 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Please join Michele Tulis for her Annual Wildflower Walk at Mills Riverside Park. We will talk about the spring ephemerals including medicinal uses, origins of their names, and strategies for survival. We will walk 1 to 2 miles, slowly. Everyone is invited, all ages. Leave as you wish.



### ANNUAL SPRING BIRD WALK

Mills Riverside Park  
Meet at the parking area  
May 10, 2025 – 7:00 a.m.

Join veteran birders Evergreen Erb and Sabina Ernst for our Annual JULT Bird Walk! Evergreen has led this avian excursion for 26 years and counting! Once again, we will welcome our newly arrived bird species. The park, with its rich mix of habitats, is especially suited for an exciting bird walk. Expect to hear and see many warblers, Eastern kingbirds by the pond, Gray catbirds, vireos and many more. Please bring a pair of binoculars and dress for the weather. The meandering walk will take several hours but you may leave at any time.

## LIFE IN A VERNAL POOL

JULT Land Stewardship Director

John Koier

There are few better examples in nature of expediency and use of niche resources than our native amphibian's use of vernal pools for reproduction of their species. Vernal pools are the short-lived pools created by snowmelt and augmented by spring rains. They usually are but a memory by sometime in June but have provided cover from predators for many amphibians and allowed them to complete their entire reproductive cycle from egg to air breathing juvenile during this brief period.

I remember coming across one of these pools advertised by the guttering mayhem of a group of male wood frogs in full amorous chorus. When my friend and I were about 50 feet from the pool there was silence. Standing at the pool's edge there was no sign of life anywhere, just placid dark water without even a tell-tale ripple. "No froggies here, boys, so just move on." After a fruitless search for those clever frogs we did. 100 feet down the hill, the chorus resumed as if we'd never been there.

Spring in Vermont is a rapid affair requiring expeditious strategies to get things done. Wood frogs are no slouches in this regard. They prefer vernal pools for their reproduction almost exclusively as there are no fish to eat their eggs



or tadpoles. As soon as daytime temperatures reach the low fifties adults migrate to pools and egg laying and fertilization begin. Eggs hatch in under a week and tadpoles metamorphose into juveniles in as little as fifty days, which is a good thing when that vernal pool has all but disappeared. If the pool dries up before the tadpoles are changed into tiny frogs, there is no survival.

Vernal pools are just another reason for the preservation of unfragmented tracts of forest land where our local amphibians like the wood frog can continue to reproduce and thrive.



Spotted Salamander

## LAND STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

JULT Board member Sabina Ernst

Visitors to the wooded sections of Kikas Valley Farm may notice some recent logging activity. The Jericho Underhill Land Trust is committed to the stewardship of our land and water, and we have undertaken this project of "Timber Stand Improvement" using ecological forestry practices. The goal of this work is twofold. Thin out selected trees to help the overall health of the whole forest and create excellent wildlife habitat in the process. Working with our forester



we identified a 25-acre section within two stands of the upper woods. Unhealthy trees will either be cut down or girdled. Girdling a tree will kill it over time and most importantly, allow it to remain standing as a dead 'snag'. Snags make excellent wildlife habitat and are an important feature of healthy woods. Trees that are cut will be left on site in the woods because leaving the woody

debris offers cover, food, and nesting sites for a variety of birds and other wildlife. Another benefit of thinning out unhealthy trees is the creation of small 'canopy gaps' which allow more sunlight to reach the remaining trees and improve the habitat diversity of the forest overall. Our work will also selectively thin trees around what are known as 'mast trees' - trees that produce nuts or fruit crops - such as red oak, bitternut hickory, black cherry and beech. These types of trees provide an important source of food to wildlife and giving them some additional light will help them remain strong and vigorous. Performing this work on a small portion of the whole forest will improve the health and biodiversity of the patch and create excellent habitat for many types of wildlife. We invite you to visit the site when you explore the woods and watch as the forest regenerates and is strengthened by our ecological approach to management.

## JULT MEMBERSHIP AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Without you, we would not exist. Sounds dramatic, but that is exactly what your membership donation does. It funds our ability to respond effectively to land conservation opportunities within our two towns. Your donation also allows us to manage the land that we own and maintain public access, steward wildlife habitats and remove invasive plant species. Thank you for your continued and greatly appreciated membership support.