

The Alpine Steward

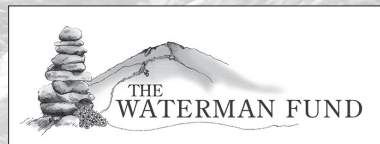
ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

FOSTERING THE SPIRIT OF WILDNESS AND CONSERVING THE ALPINE AREAS OF NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA



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THE WATERMAN FUND
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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Clockwise from top:

Sunset Ridge to Mansfield with stringing,
photograph by Lily LaRegina, 2023

Mount Abe Alpine Zone,
photograph by Andrew Scott, 2022

*Adirondack Mountain Club Summit Stewards in
botany training on Whiteface,*
photograph by Ben Brosseau, 2023

Mount Mansfield Alpine Zone,
photograph by Sarah Bailey, 2023

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Trip Abroad Brings Home Our Mission

By Lars Botzjorns

This summer I spent ten days hiking in the Italian Alps, culminating with an awe-inspiring last day under the vaulting spires of Mont Blanc. Most of our time was spent in the alpine zone which was laid out before us for miles in every direction. We witnessed impressive trail-building, some dating back centuries, where a tread had been carved or rearranged from a jumbled mass of large boulders and zig-zags up perilous slopes. There were also places where extensive trail braiding (what happens when hikers wander or lose the blazed trail) had occurred. In such a vast ecosystem, there seemed to be less concern about exactly where one walks, not to mention the cows who seemed to graze everywhere.

With no shortage of alpine ecosystems in the Alps, or worldwide, why are we so intent on taking care of our comparatively tiny patches of alpine ecosystems in the northeastern U.S.?

What value is there in preserving rare and unique places in our living world? The high mountaintops of the Northeast receive more intensive use, certainly per acre, than most places in the Alps. Off-trail trampling caused by our visitation levels can quickly degrade what exists of the fragile vegetation above treeline. Trail braiding can easily mar the aesthetic experience.

There is also something to be said about the wildness of our alpine summits. There are those who may only ever experience the alpine zone on mountains like Camel's Hump, simply for the accessibility of this place. On the approaches to Franconia Ridge, a heavily visited alpine ecosystem, the goal is to create '500 year trails' mimicking some of the ageless trails in the Alps. You will not encounter a herd of cows on Katahdin, or Mount Marcy, but those familiar with the wildness of these high peaks know how easily it can be to get caught in a wicked gale or a whiteout, and even then, there can be the exhilaration of gazing upon a vast expanse of forest below.

While we share some of the flora with the Alps (and other alpine regions), each region's flora contains unique genetic, physiological and morphological characteristics which contribute to the specialness of a place. And considering this makes me think of our home here. Great effort is being made to preserve wildness and create the conditions for 'rewilding' in the Northeast. This means to help the survival of living species of plants and animals by preserving fully intact ecosystems for their own sake. Alpine summits are obvious places to view the success of these efforts and to create the desire to do more.

The mountains of the Northeast are lauded for their beauty, challenge, and ecological integrity. These natural places certainly deserve our continuing, collective role as long-term stewards.



Mont Blanc, 2023

GRANTS AWARDED in 2023

The Waterman Fund Grants Report

By Kayla White

The Waterman Fund grants program has awarded four grants and one sponsorship for 2023 totaling \$55,381.

This funding has supported trail work, stewardship, education, and research across the alpine areas of northeastern North America. The program has awarded a total of \$368,402 since its inception over twenty years ago.

Three grants and one sponsorship went to supporting and sustaining alpine stewardship programs this year. The **Green Mountain Club** received \$11,214 for programmatic support of their Backcountry Caretaker Program on Camel's Hump. The **Maine Appalachian Trail Club** was awarded \$16,667 for their Appalachian Trail Ridgerunners program on Saddleback and Bigelow Mountains. The **Adirondack Mountain Club** received \$15,000 to expand their full-time stewardship staff and maintain continuity in the program as they hired and trained a new Summit Steward Coordinator.

Providing multi-year sponsorships is a new avenue of funding that The Waterman Fund has started to provide. Some guidelines the board requires are that organizations can apply for sponsorship for up to three years and they

need to provide yearly reporting. The qualifications for types of work that would be funded are: Education, paying for a staff position; Trail work, for a multi-year trail project; and Research, which includes long-term monitoring.

Furthermore, The Waterman Fund would provide starting money to new stewardship programs who are trying to become established. This was the case for funding the Franconia Ridge Summit Stewardship Program through the World Trails Network Americas. The Waterman Fund has provided \$10,000 for staffing Franconia Ridge with summit stewards this year.

The last grant awarded for research was to better understand the connections between messaging

that encourages ethical behavior on the trail and the understanding and perception of these messages by hikers,



Bob Popp on Alpine Walk, Mount Mansfield, photograph by Kate Songer, 2023



Sunset Ridge with puncheon to Mount Mansfield, photograph by Lily LaRegina, 2023

specifically Leave No Trace. \$2,500 went to **Mackenzie Case** from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry to fund this research.

Grant and Sponsorship applications are due each year by December 31. For more information please visit watermanfund.org or direct any inquiries to grants@watermanfund.org. Also, see page 12 for details.



Mount Abe Alpine Zone, photograph by Andrew Scott, 2022

Summit Stewards Discover Rare Plant on Algonquin Peak

The plant's range is restricted to the highest peaks of northern New England, making it one of the rarest alpine plants in the region.



Dwarf willow (*Salix herbacea*) on Algonquin, photograph by Liam Ebner, 2023

By Kevin Berend

On August 15, Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) Summit Steward Katie Leton was above treeline on Algonquin Peak, New York's second highest peak, diligently scanning the ground. She was searching for penny-sized, deep green leaves, each folded inward into a shallow cup. Within an hour, to hers and her team's astonishment, she had found it—Dwarf willow, one of the rarest plants in New York State.

Dwarf willow (*Salix herbacea*) is a very tiny shrub, only one half to five centimeters tall, that grows in colonies, with trunks and main branches underground and only the upper branchlets sticking above the ground. According to the New York Natural Heritage Program, the plant occurs in snowbeds and other protected places, such as seeps at the base of cliffs.

The plant's range is restricted to the highest peaks of northern New England, making it one of the rarest alpine plants in the region. In New York, where it is listed as Critically Imperiled, it was believed to have been limited to a single population on Mount Marcy. A historic record from 1980 noted a population on Algonquin Peak, but a thorough search conducted in 1988 yielded no results. Until Leton's discovery, Dwarf willow was considered extirpated there.

"The rediscovery of this tiny plant on Algonquin after an absence of many decades is very exciting and indicates better prospects for this species to persist in New York," said Richard Ring, Chief Botanist for the New York Natural Heritage Program [NYNHP]. "It is also a testament to the Summit Stewardship Program's persistent efforts to steward the recovery of the unique and fragile alpine ecosystems atop all New York's High Peaks, which provide a home to this willow and many other rare species. It is wonderful to have an example of successful conservation and stewardship at such a heavily visited site."

The discovery comes within a year of another significant find, when during a field trip at the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering last October, ADK Summit Steward Coordinator Liam Ebner rediscovered Purple crowberry (*Empetrum atropurpureum*) on Mount Mansfield, Vermont. The plant was thought by state botanists to have been extirpated from the mountain, not seen since 1906.

These recent finds are a testament to the value of not only preserving remote mountain landscapes as a refuge for biodiversity, but also that of trained observers, such as summit stewards, who spend time in those places and come to know them intimately. Through hours, days, and weeks of attention, stewards notice things that many others do not. Though, for the most part, they are not formally trained botanists, stewards are often the people best placed to monitor them. As climate change continues to bring unpredictable changes to alpine areas of the Northeast, such an eye for subtlety will be a crucial asset.

Kayla White, Waterman Fund board member and Stewardship Manager for the Adirondack Mountain Club, said that the program's ongoing partnership with NYNHP has been mutually beneficial. "NYNHP taps into us quite a



ADK Summit Steward Coordinator Liam Ebner, photograph by Ben Brosseau, 2023



ADK Summit Steward Katie Leton with *Salix herbacea*, photograph by Liam Ebner, 2023

bit," she said. Stewards review NYNHP records and conduct searches for rare alpine plants, especially populations that have not been seen for some time. The results of those searches inform NYNHP databases, providing up to date information about how the New York's alpine areas are changing. White added that the discovery is "something [Leton] will probably remember the rest of her life." Summit Stewards plan to search other Adirondack mountains where historic records of Dwarf willow exist. "The plants are out there," says White. "We just have to go find them."

The Waterman Fund has supported the Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Program since 2004. Funding in 2023 enabled ADK to hire an additional full-time Stewardship Coordinator to oversee the program while continuing to grow stewardship work throughout the Adirondack Park. The Summit Stewardship Program is a partnership between ADK, The Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

15 Years of The Waterman Fund Essay Contest

by Chris Woodside, Editor-in-Chief, Appalachia Journal

In fall 2007 while attending the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering in Acadia National Park, *Appalachia* and The Waterman Fund launched a joint venture, our essay contest, which has nurtured the careers of fulltime writers, boosted those who work in ecology and mountain-based jobs, and elevated the quality of writing in the journal.

Our goal was to help writers build professions in environmental and alpine writing: fields the world needs. The modern journalistic and literary world often exploits writers who try to enter it. Many journals don't pay writers. Others ask them to pay just to have their work considered. Entering the writing field can feel to new writers like an elaborate game designed to trip them up. We wanted to provide meaningful prize money that might help them with such expenses as rent, groceries, laptop repair, or skill building.



Mount Mansfield Alpine Zone, photograph by Sarah Bailey, 2023

Blair Braverman, a co-winner in 2011, the year she graduated from Colby College, has built a strong career as a writer and adventurer based in northern Wisconsin. We were the first journal to publish her work. Besides her winning

piece, "On Being Lost," she published another essay about Alaska that same year with the journal. Soon after, her first book about working in Alaska, *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube: Chasing Fear and Finding Home in the Great White North*, came out. She appeared on the reality show "Naked and Afraid" in 2019 and is a contributing editor for Outside. She ran her dogsled team in the 2019 Iditarod race. Braverman's third book, a novel called *Small Game*, was published in 2022.

Katherine Dykstra, whose thoughtful essay on an urban bear won in 2012, is a writer and editor in New York. Her book on a cold murder case, *What Happened to Paula: An Unsolved Death and the Danger of American Girlhood*, was published in 2021 by Norton and was included in the best of summer lists in *The New York Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and others.

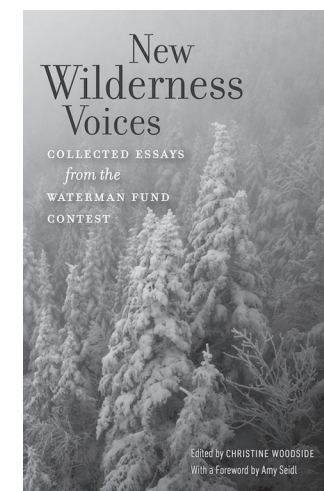
Michael Wejchert was our 2013 winner with his insightful piece, "Epigoni, Revisited," about using technology while trying to climb Alaska's Mount Deborah. Wejchert has told us that when he submitted this piece, he told himself if it got nowhere, he was going to give up on trying to be a writer. What if our contest hadn't existed? The next year, Wejchert co-wrote, with writer/climber David Roberts, the foreword to our *Appalachia* anthology, *No Limits but the Sky*. This year, Ecco/Harper Collins published his book on an Alaska climbing accident and its aftermath, *Hidden Mountains: Survival and Reckoning After a Climb Gone Wrong*. This book captures the unravelling of a relationship and the shifting of expectations after a climber almost dies. Wejchert has written for *Appalachia*, *Alpinist*, *Ascent*, *The New York Times*, and other outlets. He also is a mountain guide and leads the Mountain Rescue Service from his home in North Conway, New Hampshire.

Erica Berry, our 2015 runner-up, was beginning a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing when her piece about guiding teenaged girls rose to second place in the contest. From the moment she came up to me at a writing conference in California to introduce herself, I knew her career would find solid footing. She's written about outdoor subjects, food, and other topics for outlets including *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *Gastronomica*, *Atlantic Online* and others. Her book *Wolfish: Wolf, Self, and the Stories We Tell About Fear*, was published in February.

Our 2020 winner, Tampa, Florida resident **Lorraine Monteagut** ("The Wild Self"), published her first book with Chicago Review Press: *Brujas: The Magic and Power of Witches of Color*, about Cuban ancestral healing practices.

Several of our winners have used their writing skills in combination with other work. York County Community College (Maine) English professor **Dianne Fallon** (who won in 2010) was named Citizen of the Year in Kittery, Maine, last year. **Bethany Taylor**, co-winner in 2011 for her essay "The Warp and Weft," about the Crawford Path, worked as a sustainability coordinator for Bowdoin College and is now the huts manager for the Appalachian Mountain Club. She has also served on our Essay Committee at the Fund. Olivia Box (2022) is working as a climate planning intern for the U.S. Forest Service. **Jason Mazurowski** (2021) is an ecologist and naturalist at the University of Vermont. **Claire Dumont** (2021 runner-up) is an administrative coordinator for arborists and tree care specialists in Missouri.

The contest has proven to us that it is possible to help launch the careers of some very talented writers and those in related careers. And that without our contest, that journey might have contained more bumps. In the late winter, we will begin reviewing entries in the next round of The Waterman Fund Essay Contest, and we look forward to helping more writers make a difference.

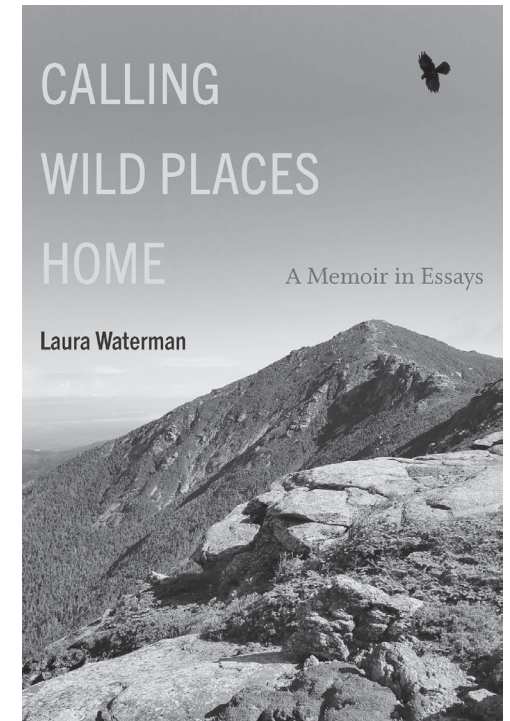


New Wilderness Voices:
Collected Essays
from the
Waterman Fund Contest

Book is available at
watermanfund.org



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Poignant and vulnerable essays that weave together seemingly disparate themes of wild places and mountain stewardship, books and reading, and building a new life after loss.

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LAURA WATERMAN is the author of
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Our 2023 Essay Contest Winners

by Laura Waterman

The Waterman Fund is proud to announce the winners of our fourteenth essay contest. We welcomed nearly thirty entries of which nine made the final round. The committee is composed of current and former board members, outside readers, and the editor of *Appalachia Journal*. Our First Place Winner for our 2023 Essay Contest was **Austin Hagwood** for his piece, “Smoke Report.” We had two runners-up, **Lela Stanley** for “Sky’s the Limit” and **Elise Wallace** for “Pilgrimage.”

Our prompt for 2023 was as follows: Are we making hiking/mountain/wilderness trip plans in consideration of

the climate changes we are experiencing now? How about our relation to flora and fauna? How are climate changes affecting our expectations of what we’ll see and hear when we go out there? The warming trend can: melt glaciers and loosen rocks, thereby increasing rockfalls. Cause avalanches the consistency of mush. Heavy rains cause flooding and increase risk of river crossings. Raising temperatures cause heat exhaustion, dehydration, and death. How have the results of climate change affected our approach. our attitudes, our decision-making to wilderness travel and our human need for wildness? Will fewer or more people find their way out there? And what would that mean for both us and wildness?

The following are excerpts from each of this year’s three selections...

The fire began when lightning forked and gave birth to blazing triplets. White-hot plasma burst from a storm about the Bitterroot Mountains, burrowed into drought-dried lodgepole bark, and vanished with a crack that scented the air with a coppery tang. From where he stood inside Hell’s Half Acre Lookout, a watchtower eight miles from the strike, Mark Moak pulled back a red ponytail and affixed binoculars to his face. The circular lenses encompassed a brutal topography of canyons and cliffs, parched conifers on the border of Idaho and Montana browned from a rainless summer. Air above the treetops shimmered under mid-July heat.

Austin Hagwood, “Smoke Report”

This essay stemmed from months spent observing the same landscape through the lens of different seasons and visitors. Lookout towers invite meditation on wildland fire, and similar questions from visitors over the years—questions on whether a charred view felt somehow disappointing—led me to question the expectations we bring to forests, landscapes, and the idea of wildness.

Austin Hagwood is a writer, fly-fishing guide, and former lookout based in Missoula, MT. He received an MFA from the University of Montana, an MPhil in social anthropology from the University of Cambridge, and a BA from the University of Notre Dame. His interests include the intersection of environment and culture in the American West and his writing has appeared in *The Drake*, *Notre Dame Magazine*, and *National Geographic’s Open Explorer*.

In the summer of 2020, in the middle of all of it, we had a particular thunderstorm in Washington, DC. It was one in a line of them, a late July mini-season of tempests sweeping east. My girlfriend spent those days in the kitchen, clanking pots and beats, distractants, avoiding the windows. I sat on the porch steps and watched rain turn the air white. We lived near a metro stop, and daily, commuters sprinted past, umbrellaless, caught out under the exploding storms.

Lela Stanley, “Sky’s the Limit”

Lela Stanley works as a policy expert and investigator with an international climate advocacy group, where she has led projects documenting illegal deforestation and the seaborne Russian oil trade. She lives on the East Coast.

“It’s good that you’re seeing this now because it’s about to get catastrophic,” Sean Shaheen a retired wildlife biologist, told me. It was afternoon and we were standing in his front yard east of Yellowstone National Park near Cody, Wyoming. Despite the stormy and warm June day our conversation began when I asked about winter. To Shaheen, winters aren’t so bad anymore. He remembered when there was about a month of temperatures near negative 30 degrees Fahrenheit, but now it rarely gets below zero.

Elise Wallace, “Pilgrimage”

In this essay Elise Wallace writes: “I addressed the mental and emotional toll of climate change on one outdoor adventurer (me) in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and explored how this alters outdoor experiences for humanity. The essay addresses the physical impacts of climate change and how they impact our mindset both when embarking on a journey, and returning from one. I am a soon-to-be graduate of The University of New Hampshire’s MFA program. My thesis is a collection of essays about climate change, eco-anxiety. My writing seeks to return to places, memories, and experiences so that I can articulate my connection to the earth both in memoriam, and to understand how to be in nature, write about nature, and be a nature writer in this new context; I live in Bethlehem, New Hampshire with my dog, and teach at a small boarding school. Outside of the classroom I can be found hiking, drinking coffee and reading.”

• 2024 ALPINE ESSAY CONTEST INFORMATION •

The Waterman Fund seeks new voices on the role and place of wilderness in today’s changing world. Our prompt for the 2024 Essay Contest is as follows:

Wilderness has the capacity to create memories, some of which are so powerful they affect the entire course of a life. Describe a single moment you have experienced in the wilderness that profoundly changed you. How did that moment reverberate through your life? What changes to your world exist because of that single moment in time?

The deadline for submissions is March 1, 2024. Submissions should be 2000-3000 words. Please include contact information and a few lines about why the writer feels their essay is appropriate for the contest. Online submissions should be double-spaced, manuscripts in 12-point font. Word doc

compatible files are preferred. If submitting by mail, please include an email address. We select a first and second place winner and award generous prize money, the amounts to be decided on soon. Winning essays are published in *Appalachia Journal*, as well as on our website.

For purposes of this contest, we consider an emerging writer a person of any age who has not previously been published in a national magazine or written a book-length work of fiction or narrative nonfiction on topics of wilderness, wildness, or the ethics and ecology of environmental issues. We welcome personal, scientific, adventure, or memoir essays. Fiction, poetry, or songs are not eligible for this contest. More information is available at watermanfund.org. Please send inquiries to essays@watermanfund.org.

MEET DONALD HUDSON

The recipient of the 2023 Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Award is Donald Hudson. Don Hudson completed his undergraduate degree in French and Environmental Science at Dartmouth College and went on to get his Masters in Botany from University of Vermont, where he completed extensive field research regarding the reproductive biology of a rare alpine species found on Katahdin: *Saxifraga paniculata ssp. neogaea*. He often speaks of climbing and bushwacking on Katahdin (daily) during this time, to record the phenology of this rare plant, as it often grows on steep alpine cliffs and ledges. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, Don completed field work to track rare alpine species in some of the most remote and hard-to-reach places across Katahdin’s alpine and subalpine zone. He then got his PhD at Indiana University in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and eventually became president of the Chewonki Foundation because of his appreciation for outdoor education and natural history. He has led countless backcountry trips and excursions into Maine’s wilderness for students across ages. In 1989, along with Charlie Cogbill, Don helped complete the first baseline characterization of alpine vegetation on Katahdin,



Left to right: Andrea Tirrell, Don Hudson, Charlie Cogbill.

by completing sixteen transects across the alpine zone, from Pamola Peak to the Northwest Plateau. He prepared reports for Baxter State Park about the vegetation found in Katahdin’s alpine and subalpine zones in the 1980s and ‘90s that shaped the conservation and research being done on the mountain today.



PhD candidate at the University of Maine-Orono, Andrea Tirrell, writes for Don’s nomination:

When I became a graduate student at the University of Maine and was interested in resurveying Katahdin’s alpine zone, Don was one of the first people to reach out and offer his help. As a member of the Baxter State Park Research Committee, Don helped finalize my surveying methods and as summer approached, he offered his help in finding and resurveying the original transects. He climbed to Katahdin’s table and with myself and my field assistant numerous times during the summers of 2021 and 2022, to aid in this tremendous resurvey effort. He recently contributed a chapter titled “Alpine Summits: An Ode to a Mountain” to the book *Our Maine: Exploring Its Rich Natural Heritage*. Don and I recently gave a guest lecture to an ecology course at College of the Atlantic, where we presented our vegetative surveys on Katahdin and the experience of doing field work in such harsh environments. He is

currently a member of the Baxter State Park Research Committee, International Appalachian Trail board, Friends of Baxter State Park board, along with many other roles across other environmental organizations. For many years, Don also served as the President of the Chewonki Foundation in Maine.

Don is an incredibly kind and dedicated botanist and field ecologist who has devoted a great portion of his life to research and conservation of Katahdin’s alpine plants. Without his generosity and eagerness to climb the tallest mountain in Maine repeatedly, we would not have been able to complete the resurvey efforts, and therefore would not have an understanding of how climate change may be impacting Maine’s largest alpine zone. It is for all of these reasons that I believe Don is more than deserving of this dignified award.

Waterman Fund Annual Dinner

On November 4, The Waterman Fund invited partners and patrons to a plated dinner at Garden Court Restaurant in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, to celebrate recent work in the preservation of wild spaces and to spur discussion about the future of wilderness preservation in the Northeast. The event was an opportunity to connect with members of the environmental community in the region and to consider some important questions: What does wild(er)ness mean in the twenty-first century? What are the priorities for regional land conservation? How can we better collaborate toward shared goals?

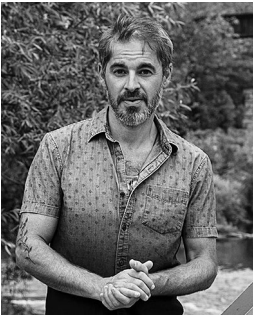
On the evening, we also celebrated the recipient

of the Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Award, Donald Hudson, as well as the award recipients for this year’s Waterman Fund essay contest: Austin Hagwood, and runners up Lela Stanley and Elise Wallace. Finally, Bob Linck of Northeast Wilderness Trust, delivered a closing talk on wild(er)ness, rewilding, and wild spaces, which focused on the importance of protecting intact ecosystems for both the preservation of biodiversity and to mitigate the effects of climate change. It was a wonderful evening and the Fund thanks all those who came out to support these ecological endeavors. Stay tuned for dates and details for our next Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering that will be held in the fall of 2024...!!

Two New Board Members Welcomed

We thank **Nancy Ritger** and **Ilana Copel** for their service on The Waterman Fund board of directors. For 2023, we welcome new board members David Crews and Steve Crowe.

DAVID CREWS



Photograph at the Walloomsac River by Adam Preiser

Originally from the state of New Jersey, where he served for fifteen years as a public high school Literature teacher, David Crews now lives and works at Clear Brook Farm, an organic vegetable farm located in the southern Vermont valley. He is author of *Incantation*, a limited-edition handmade chapbook of poems designed and produced by Josh Dannin of Directangle Press (2022), *Wander-Thrush: Lyric Essays of the Adirondacks* (Ra Press, 2018), and *High Peaks* (Ra Press, 2015)—a poetry collection that

STEVE CROWE

Steve Crowe is a long-time member and volunteer with the ATC and GMC, including experience working as Trails and Shelters Chair for the Worcester Section. He also served as Nelson Crag Trail Adopter for the upper half of the trail to the summit of Mount Washington. He has served as treasurer for many other organizations and runs Sunshine Landscaping Co, Inc. in Massachusetts. “My specialty is pruning Krumholtz and maybe scree walls,” he writes. And Steve thinks he has attended nearly every Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering, an ecologically-minded stewardship conference hosted and run every other year by The Waterman Fund.

ALPINE STEWARD AWARD: *Nominate someone for 2024!*

To nominate someone for the **Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award** and/or the **Emerging Steward Award**, please send nomination letters by **August 1, 2024** to The Waterman Fund (forms are 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. Please visit watermanfund.org for more details. *Anyone can be nominated!*



•• FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAIL PROJECTS CONTINUES ••

In previous years the Waterman Fund has discussed providing larger grant awards towards trail projects to better serve the mission of the Fund. The Fund has cumulatively awarded over \$355,340 towards trail projects since 2002. These individual grants have been generally between \$2,000-\$3,000. As a result, the Fund has not been able to invest a significant amount of funding towards trail projects.

Due to the impact of the pandemic, in recent dialogue with land managers, trail maintainers, and researchers, there appears to be a need to invest into the greater alpine trail infrastructure. This improved trail infrastructure will help protect the fragile alpine ecosystem that surrounds these trails.

In the 2023-2024 grant cycle, the Waterman Fund is offering up to \$15,000 towards alpine / sub-alpine trail reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. This grant will be in addition to our annual grants awarded and will follow the same guidelines and parameters.

We encourage nonprofit trail maintenance organizations to apply to the Waterman Fund if there is a trail project that the Fund can contribute to. The Fund is excited to offer this expanded opportunity to help strengthen trail stewardship in the alpine areas of Northeastern North America. **Please submit a grant application by December 15, 2023.**

FROM THE TREASURER

Waterman Fund Fiscal Report for 2022- 2023

Annual contributions came in just under our goal of \$20,000.

We approved \$33,014 in grants for the 2022 field season and paid out \$65,287 during the fiscal year to organizations that completed work and submitted final reports, including grants from previous years that were deferred due to COVID. As of March 31, 2023, there were \$85, 294 in outstanding grants, including \$55,381 in grants approved for the 2023 field season, which is reflected in our net assets.

Administrative expenses also came in under budget, as well as program expenses (which include our annual stewardship awards, essay contest awards, and the 2022 Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering). In addition, the Fund passed along \$8.905 in registration fees for the Gathering to the Green Mountain Club which hosted the event.

The Waterman Fund Board of Directors withdrew \$50,000 from the Funds investment assets to help pay for our increased support for alpine education, trail maintenance and research programs over the past couple of years. Our increased giving has been in response to the increased staff costs to stewardship programs around the region and the relative lack of funding for education efforts compared to trail reconstruction projects.

INCOME	
Annual Contributions	\$19,406
Transfer from Investments	\$50,000
EXPENSES	
Administrative	\$6,904
Programs	\$5,000
Grants Disbursed	\$65,287
TOTAL NET ASSETS	
March 31, 2022	\$447,825
March 31, 2023	\$395,244



Thank You from Page Hollow ... *Laura Waterman and Sean Robinson*

We thank **Annie Bellerose** and **Meika Hashimoto** for their guidance and commitment to the Essay Contest.

Heartfelt thanks to our readers who carry the contest forward: **Rebecca Oreskes, Val Story, Emily Mitchell, Alice Tufel, Emile Hallez, Mary Margaret Sloan, and Christine Woodside** in her dual role as both valued reader and publisher of the winning essays in *Appalachia Journal*.

Always a sincere thank you to **Brian Post** who handles website hosting and keeps our content updated.

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Many thanks to each of you for supporting The Waterman Fund!

FEATURE

from Mōnadenok

What's it like
at the summit
on say a Saturday

the county fair
he says

and I look
up a wall of bedrock

thick curved roots
pockets of earth
wet with runoff

imagine my footing
and go

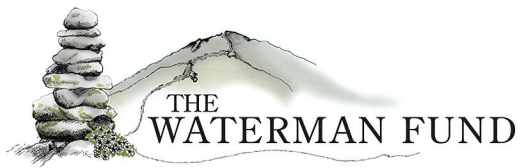
by David Crews



William Preston Phelps, Mount Monadnock, c.1898

Mount Monadnock stands at 3,165 feet above sea level and resides in southern New Hampshire near the town of Jaffrey, what are ancestral lands and the home today of Pennacook, Cowasuck, and other Abenaki and Anishinaabe Ojibwe peoples. The above fragment comes from a 427-line lyric poem currently in progress that is a revision of a poem (of the same length) written and published in 1847 by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The Waterman Fund recognizes that the Northeast is ancestral land to many indigenous peoples. We hope to support and advocate alongside those individuals and communities who live here now and with those forcibly removed from their homelands. We hope this land acknowledgment can serve as a starting point to support the important dialogues needed to deepen our perspectives on what it means to steward and care for wild spaces and the living world.



Fostering the Spirit of Wildness and Conserving
the Alpine Areas of Northeastern North America

P.O. Box 1064, East Corinth, VT 05040



A group of cows on a grassy hill, Gran Paradiso, Italy, 2023.
Story on page 2.