

RATTLESNAKE GUTTER TRUST

1998 Annual Report

Report of the Secretary

Nineteen ninety-eight was our tenth anniversary as a land trust. We celebrated with a party at the Leverett Elementary School which featured Julie Grow Collier's lovely *Birds of Prey* demonstration, with live hawks, falcons, owls, and a magnificent golden eagle. A large audience enjoyed this show and joined us for refreshments. A short business meeting was conducted before the demonstration.

On the heels of 1997's successful purchase of East Leverett Meadow came the opportunity to add another link to the chain we hope will become Leverett's wildlife corridor, stretching from Shutesbury to Amherst. Through the combined efforts of the Trust, The Leverett Conservation Commission, the Kestrel Trust, the Valley Land Fund, and the Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club this purchase was accomplished. Several grants and an incredible outpouring of local support enabled these organizations to raise all of the funds necessary. The 51-acre parcel, located along Shutesbury Road, includes a 2,000-foot section of Roaring Brook and bisects the M&M Trail. The Town of Leverett has been given ownership of this land.

In another quiet transaction, the deed to a 16-acre parcel on the southeastern side of Shutesbury Road was donated to the Trust by Andrew Scheffey. Starting at the Shutesbury-Leverett town line, this gift adds a significant stretch to the Corridor and preserves one of the lovely scenic roads in Leverett.

Management plans for the Long Hill Natural Area and East Leverett Meadow, designed by Brooke Thomas and Bill Healy, respectively, were discussed and implemented by the Trust as part of our continuing stewardship of these properties. Both plans enhance these very different properties with the primary attention in each case being to promote public enjoyment of these protected areas.

Such efforts, with attention given to other areas that may be threatened, consumed much of our time in 1998. We are pleased that the purchase of the Sharlu property as a working farm means that we will continue to enjoy the sight of horses on that important parcel.

Trail work and markers on the Outdoor Classroom's Nature Trail at LES make this a delightful place to take a short hike. Try it some sunny day!

Our spring *Newsletter*, mailed to all Leverett residents, the fall *Newsletter* sent to RGT members, and the *Rattler*, written and illustrated by school children and published by the Trust, help us to keep in touch with you.

Membership is open to all Leverett residents. We invite your participation.

Annette Gibavic
Secretary