CELEBRATE THE TAM’S 25TH ANNIVERSARY!

The Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) is one of the defining features in our small community. The TAM provides a means to connect to nature and the surrounding green spaces, recreate through hiking, biking, birding, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, and more. A means to explore and to educate, be it through a personal hobby or by participating in a guided hike or camp.

Although the TAM is part of our lives, many do not know its history and what it takes to keep this valuable resource available. In 1988, Amy Sheldon was hired by the town of Middlebury as a Coordinator for the newly fledged Middlebury Land Trust. At the time, she frequently hiked on Chipman Hill, but couldn’t believe how few people she saw on such a lovely trail. With the idea of Boston’s Emerald Necklace path around the city in her mind, and knowledge of the recently conserved lands around Middlebury, she began thinking that we too could have such a trail! Amy convinced the MALT board to expand the mission to include a trail. With the help from some key individuals, they created the name “TAM” and designed the logo. The first sections of TAM trail, including Chipman Hill, Battell Woods and Wright Park, traveled through public lands and were easy enough to develop. But other sections presented many hurdles, including acquiring easements and crossing roads, the railroad, and Otter Creek. Bud Reed followed Amy as the next director and was instrumental, along with John Derick, in creating some big TAM connections, including the construction of the Boat House and Belden Falls Bridges. From the TAM’s inception to today, it has been a constant process of adding trail, acquiring easements, building bridges and boardwalks, maintaining, rerouting, and mapping.

Now as we celebrate the TAM’s 25th Anniversary we are looking at the trail’s future and long term viability. In the past, our only TAM fundraiser was the annual TAM Trek event. The funds raised through the event are crucial in helping to cover trail work and maintenance costs. But, more is needed to cover the more than $15K needed annually to maintain the TAM.
Working with our community to conserve natural and productive landscapes, and to enhance scenic, recreational, and educational opportunities.

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MALT News is the official newsletter of the Middlebury Area Land Trust, Inc.
Published twice-annually
Call 802-388-1007 or email info@maltvt.org for information or with your comments.
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Building the Boathouse Bridge

To celebrate the past 25 years and provide for the next 25, MALT has created the John Derrick TAM Endowment Fund. To date, TAM supporters have donated $43K, and our goal is to raise a total of $125K by the end of 2015. A Committee of past and present directors and board members are working hard on this fundraising goal. The Addison Independent will continue to print a monthly article highlighting specific sections of the trail and updating the public on our fundraising efforts. Once established, the endowment will fund trail maintenance and ensure the TAM’s viability and long-term use.

As a MALT supporter, I invite you to contribute and help build the $125K endowment to ensure the TAM’s long-term viability. To find out more about the TAM endowment fundraising campaign or to make a special contribution and or pledge contact MALT.

TAM Trail Running Group Starting
Meet Tuesdays on the TAM at 5:45pm (location TBA), to run for an hour or so. All paces welcome! If we get a good enough turnout, we could have different speeds, and then meet back up afterwards for drinks and eats. For information, contact Ben at 603-660-1728 or ben.bruno1@gmail.com.
MARCH HIKE: Tracking in Wright Park
A cold wintry landscape is a perfect time to go out and explore nature, as 12 trekkers learned this past March 22nd on MALT’s winter tracking hike in Wright Park, led by Mo Bissonnette. “The snow has many fascinating stories to tell, you just have to know how to read them.” As we quickly learned, tracks in the snow can be a little confusing at first but with a little patience you can begin to unravel the stories animals leave behind. Mo’s advice is to keep an open mind, don’t make quick assumptions, and ask lots of questions. So, next winter instead of sitting inside wondering what to do, get out and enjoy the stories nature has to share.

What Good Are Ticks?
This has been a tick-heavy spring in spite of the cold winter, so we found some information from Debbie Hadley, naturalist, that might make you feel better about those nasty little critters.

But why do we need ticks, exactly? Ticks serve an important role in the ecosystem. For one thing, ticks are food. Reptiles, amphibians, and birds all eat them, as they are an essential food source.

Next, ticks host a variety of other organisms. Ticks carry viruses, bacteria, and other microscopic life. Although some of these stowaways are the source of illnesses, in the grand scheme of things these organisms are part of the diversity of our planet.

Lastly, ticks help control their host populations. Carrying capacity and population control are concepts for all kinds of predator-prey relationships, and ticks are predators due to their diet. Add disease transport, and they are pretty effective at reducing carrying capacity of their tasty hosts.

So really, ticks are just doing what they’ve been doing for millions of years. Just try to keep them off you! It’s no fun to be prey.
The 11th TAM Trek, Sunday, September 28th,

The TAM Trek is planned by the TAM Trek Committee: Christy Lynn, Jerrod Rushton, Jono Chapin, Nicole Wilkerson, Amy Roberts and MALT staff.

Individuals, families or teams of four to six people are encouraged to hike 3.5 miles or run one or more sections of the TAM. There will be races of the full TAM (about 16 miles), half TAM (8 miles), quarter TAM (4 miles), and a Pint (2 miles) as well.

Supporting the TAM: Our goal is to raise more than $10,000 towards TAM maintenance costs.

Pledges from family, friends and coworkers can be collected to support the improvement of the TAM. Individuals or team who raise the most money will be eligible for special prizes.

Trek Day, Sunday, September 28, 2014

Event location starts and ends at Middlebury College Football Stadium parking lot.

Full TAM starts at 7:00 am.

Half TAM - 8:30 am.

Quarter TAM - 9:00 am.

Pint TAM - 9:30 am.

TAM Hike - 9:00 am.

All participants will be eligible for prizes like gift certificates, t-shirts and merchandise from local sponsors, and can enjoy homemade and locally donated refreshments.

Fees: The event costs $25 for individuals, $50 for families and $90 for teams. After early registration, entry price will increase to $30, $60, and $115, respectively.

Registration: Pay by check or online using Network for Good. You can also register on Active.com at www.active.com/middlebury-vt/running/races/tam-trek-2014.

MUSIC, FOOD, PRIZES, GIFTS TO PURCHASE

TAM trail workers

We are excited to have the students from the Counseling Service School back as trail helpers! These students put in a lot of physical work hauling gravel and cutting brush away from the trail, and have a good time doing it!

Thank you to our volunteers!

MALT would like to extend a big thank you to our hardworking volunteers.

John Derick spends an enormous amount of time working on the Trail, alone or with students from MUHS, MUMS or Middlebury College, as well as with our student interns. These students learn a lot about maintaining a hiking trail from his expertise.

David Hallam is our office volunteer, and he has been keeping us organized for years. We really appreciate him spending his time on our cranky old database, when he volunteers at other places, and has grandchildren he might rather be with. Thanks for all you do, Dave!

Katherine Branch, our MALT hike representative, makes it to a lot of our hikes to introduce the leader and make sure things go smoothly. Thanks very much!

Many thanks go out to Otter Creek Audubon Society, for their partnership with us on the Wildlife Walks at Otter View Park and Hurd Grasslands, the Family Quest at Wright Park, and invasive plant removal efforts.

All of our hike leaders are volunteers and take time out of their weekend to teach a little of what they know. Thanks so much to all of you!
MALT student interns of 2014

We are once again very fortunate to have Middlebury College student interns help with our maps and trail work projects here at MALT. Over the winter session, Caroline Goodwin worked on new GIS trail maps for the TAM kiosks. She developed maps for Wright Park, Otter Creek Gorge, and Chipman Hill. This spring semester, Kurt Alles worked on creating a new conservation parcel map, which is several years out of date. And this summer, we welcome Marshall Strong as our new TAM/GIS intern. He’s from Rochester, New York, and is entering his last semester at Middlebury College this fall. He has spent several summers doing trail building and maintenance in New Mexico, and is looking forward to spending his days on the TAM this summer. He will be working on the TAM with John Derick, Kirk Fiske and various volunteer groups like MUHS students and United Way Day of Caring volunteers. If you see him out working on the trail, say hello! In addition, he will work on more exciting map projects for us, maybe even an interactive TAM map.

SUPPORT OTTER VIEW PARK
by Purchasing a Plank!
This is a great way to show your support for this in-town gem. You may choose to honor a family member, pet, civic group or even quote poetry.

Each plank costs $250, 25 character limit per plank. Our local engraving artist is Don Mason of Vermont Laser Products in Weybridge.

Contact joni@malftvt.org for more info
TAM Volunteers Make It Happen!  
Trail Work Days 2014

**Saturday, May 24th**—Project Work on the TAM, Jackson Trail Section. Eight people attended to trail work, fixed the boardwalk, built a small trail reroute and worked on removing brush. Thanks, everyone!

**Saturday, June 7th**—National Trails Day
Work on graveling wet areas, bridge repair, or clearing trail. 9:00 am–12 noon. Call for location. 388-1007.

**United Way Day of Caring**
Work Project on the TAM. September date to be announced. Sign up at [www.unitedwayaddisoncounty.org](http://www.unitedwayaddisoncounty.org)

**Any day you are out**—Take along a trash bag and keep the trail neat and clear of branches. Try to avoid using the trail when it is wet and muddy. Please inform the MALT office of any large downed trees or other major disturbance. Thank you!

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**Marsh, Meadow, and Grassland Wildlife Walks**

Middlebury Area Land Trust and Otter Creek Audubon Society invite you to join us as we survey birds and wildlife of Otter View Park and the Hurd Grassland.

All walks start at Otter View Park parking lot in Middlebury. Shorter and longer routes possible. The primary walking path at OVP is universally accessible.

**Thursday, June 12, 7am**  
**Saturday, July 12, 7am**  
**Thursday, August 14, 7am**  
**Saturday, September 13, 8am**

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**WANTED**

To borrow for trail work:  
DR power wagon  
Pontoon boat, or floating dock for bridge work in Otter Creek  
**Donated:**  
Wheelbarrows, shovels, picks
OTTER CREEK GORGE HIKE: Flying Squirrels

by Katherine Branch

On Saturday, April 26th, Middlebury College senior Carson Hauck led a group of hikers through Otter Creek Gorge, pointing out places most likely to be frequented by flying squirrels and keeping up a running commentary on the habits of these fascinating creatures. Carson has developed an expertise in flying squirrels by virtue of his senior research project, which discovered the first reported documentation in Vermont of a parasite called Strongyloides robustus in the southern flying squirrel. Two species of North American flying squirrels, the northern flying squirrel (Glaucomys sabrinus) and the southern flying squirrel (Glaucomys volans), live in Vermont, one of a handful of states in which both species occur. Other studies have found that the northern flying squirrel is much more likely to die from the parasite than the southern flying squirrel. The northern flying squirrel is extremely important, because the squirrel spreads spores of fungi that live at the base of evergreen trees and contribute to the health of these trees and Vermont ecosystem overall.

Although Carson pointed out that flying squirrels don’t actually fly, they have adapted so that they can glide through the air much greater distances than other squirrels. They are able to glide by spreading a furry membrane, much like a parachute, the stretches between their “wrists” and “ankles”. This gliding allows them to avoid traveling on the floor of the forest, where they would be more likely to become prey to other animals, and thus is a competitive advantage for them. Unfortunately, flying squirrels are nocturnal, so it’s unlikely that they will be seen in the day.

However, Carson brought along an issue of Montana Outdoors, which has a series of remarkable photos of the squirrels “in flight”.

Flying squirrel (Glaucomys sabrinus), credits unknown
Beginning Bird Walk in Wright Park  
June 21st, 9-11am. With Otter Creek Audubon Society. Explore shrublands, forests, wetlands, along the banks of Otter Creek. Snacks! Bring binoculars if you can, and this hike is rain or shine. Family-friendly, but no strollers. Meet at Seymour St. Ext. parking lot.

Family Hike in the Battell Woods  
July 26th, 9-11am. Led by Suzanne Young, Cook & Food Educator at Mary Johnson Children’s Center and MALT Member. Search for animal homes, and play forest games. For families with small children. Meet at Monroe St. entrance.

Otter Creek Paddle  
August 23, 10am-noon.  
Led by Dan Redondo, of Vermont Wetland Plant Supply in Orwell. Learn about riverside plants, and some bugs & fish. Meet at 3 Mile Bridge, south on Creek Rd. Bring a boat!

I want to help preserve the natural beauty of the Middlebury area and maintenance of the Trail Around Middlebury!

I would like to contribute at the following membership level:

- [ ] Benefactor $2,500
- [ ] Friend $100
- [ ] Supporter $1,000
- [ ] Contributor $50
- [ ] Sustaining $500
- [ ] Other $__________

Please provide the following information and mail with your check to MALT, PO Box 804, Middlebury, VT 05753.

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City/State/Zip: ______________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

If you would like to remain anonymous, check here. [ ]