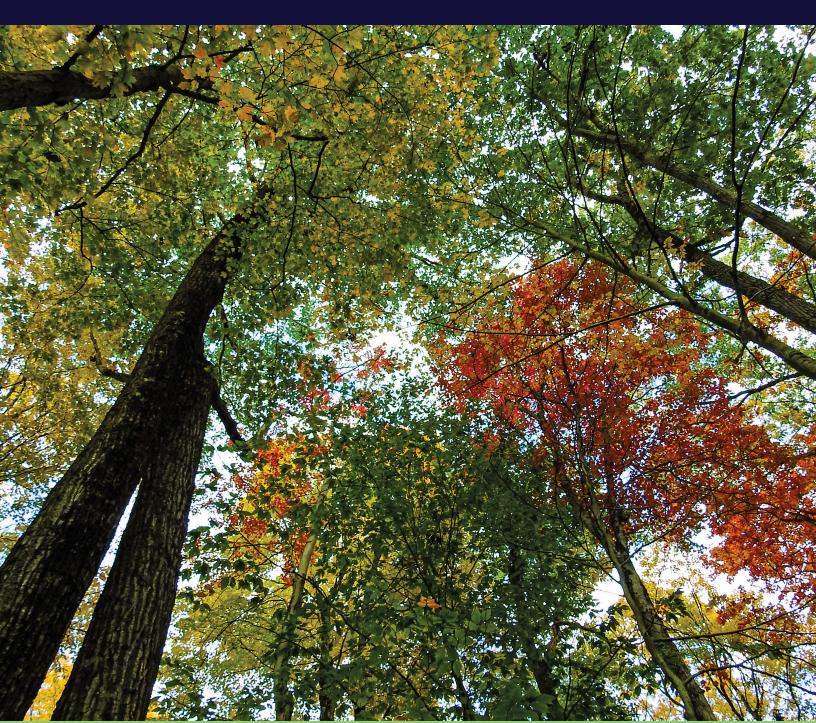
#BNRC Report



BERKSHIRE NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL

4 A Pittsfield Treasure



THE BNRC Report FALL 2025

Board of Directors

Jenny Hansell, President F. Sydney Smithers, Chair John Mancia, Vice Chair Karen Ross, Secretary Eric Katzman, Treasurer

Stephen Alsdorf Caroline Holland Pat Callahan Brian Horan John Lewis Robert Cundall Steve Cunningham W. Scott Rogers Luke Delorme Kim Seward Elena Traister Brian Fairbank Ellen Hand Ari Zorn

Staff

Doug Brown Director of Stewardship

Melissa Carhart Bookkeeper

Emily Daunis Director of Advancement

Jenifer Dickinson Stewardship Manager

Amy Dryansky **Grants Specialist**

Tyler Fogg Assistant Director of Stewardship

Charlotte Hood Volunteer & Outreach Manager

Josh Hopmans Property Manager

Cosmo LaViola Land Conservation Projects Manager

Jonathan Lueken Trail Crew Leader

Nick Pitel Director of Conservation

Harrison Raycroft Stewardship & High Road Seasonal Intern

Johnny Robinson Conservation Associate

Deanna Smith High Road Manager

Kathleen Smolinski Assistant Director of Fundraising

Susan Strano Director of Finance & Accounting

Taylor Staubach Community Engagement Senior Manager

Melanie Winters **Donor Relations Manager**

Cover photo: Gabrielle K. Murphy



413-499-0596 | bnrc.org

Letter from the President

A MISSION WITH COMMUNITY AT ITS HEART

We recently revised the BNRC mission statement. It had been the same since 1967, and while it was still accurate—we do "protect and preserve the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Berkshires for public benefit and enjoyment," those words no longer fully represent everything we do, nor the essence of how we have been thinking about the work.

Once we decided to change it, we labored over every word. Do we "protect and preserve" land? Or "conserve and care for" it?

We also asked, who are we protecting, or conserving, it for? The original statement was "for public benefit and enjoyment." True, but "public" usually means "people" and nature is not just for us. It's for the wildlife, the habitat, the microorganisms that break down fallen trees.

The new wording includes "connect people with nature"—putting people and nature (and its inhabitants) on the same level of importance.

BNRC'S MISSION: To conserve and care for Berkshire lands, waters, and wildlife, and connect people with nature for a more vibrant, shared future.

Which brings me to the theme of this issue of the BNRC Report. It's all about community—helping people connect to nature while ensuring that nature is supported by and supporting people.

I'm so proud of the amazing projects and programs completed in the past year. It shows how much your commitment to supporting BNRC is making a difference.

Thank you for joining us in the journey.

Jenny Hansell, President

jhansell@bnrc.org



Celebrating a New Marlborough **Land Trust** conservation win-249 acres of working farmland will be protected forever! Left to right: Tim Lovett, Martha Bryan, and Jenny Hansell.

THE POWER OF **COMMUNITY IN ACTION**

The accomplishments you'll see here are proof of what happens when donors, volunteers, partners, and neighbors come together with one shared purpose: to care for the lands we all love.

BNRC thrives because of you. Every trail opened, every acre protected, every person welcomed into nature—it's all fueled by the generosity of donors, the hard work of volunteers, the commitment of foundations, and the strength of community partnerships. The numbers and stories in these pages are proof of the impact we create together. Thank you for making it happen!

60+ miles

of trails, free and open to all levels and abilities

3.2 new miles of trail completed

to open soon

Caring for 50 public reserves across the county



233 volunteers to monitor BNRC trails, support trail

maintenance and construction, and so much more



36,890+ acres conserved in Berkshire County (directly conserved and assists)

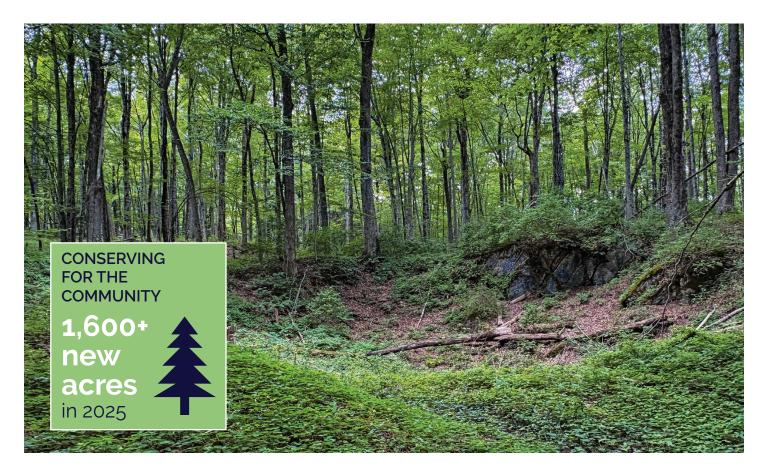
50+ free community events

1,100+ individual donors last fiscal year

101 monthly sustaining donors

PITTSFIELD'S NEWEST CONSERVATION AREA: CADWELL'S WOODS

A neighborhood treasure, now protected forever



When Mark Lipton was a kid growing up in Pittsfield, he spent hours exploring a patch of woods near his home.

"My mom probably had no idea what I was getting up to—it was all kinds of mischief," he says with a laugh.

Those woods had been in his family since 1958, when his father and aunt bought the land to build houses. They started a few along Velma Avenue, even put in road stubs for more—but the project never finished. The rest of the land stayed wild.

Now, those same woods are Pittsfield's newest conservation area. In 2020, Mark reached out to BNRC to see if the land could be conserved. "My family realized how important it was to the community," he says. "We wanted it to stay undeveloped."

The 53-acre property, shaped a bit like a guitar, stretches off Barker Road. It's surrounded by homes, railroad tracks, and the Housatonic River. A gentle 1.5-mile trail winds past the river, through wetlands, rich forest soils, and habitats for rare species.

For decades, neighbors have walked there, and the land also plays a big role in flood protection.

Local historian Joe Durwin uncovered its roots going back to the 1700s. In 1748, King George granted the land to Abe Cadwell of Westfield. When Cadwell's sons came to see it, they slept in a hollow log. By 1810, the family had built a home, farmed wheat, planted an apple orchard, and raised sheep. The Cadwells kept some of the land until 1991 nearly 250 years after that royal land grant.

Because it was one of the last big open spaces inside city limits, the property was a high priority for conservation. Once Mark and his family decided to move forward, BNRC partnered with Jim McGrath from Pittsfield Parks & Recreation, Jim secured funding from the Community Preservation Act and the Massachusetts LAND program to buy the



property. BNRC now holds a conservation restriction, ensuring the park will stay open to the public forever.

"This project reaffirms BNRC's commitment to Pittsfield," says BNRC President Jenny Hansell. "One of our first projects, back in 1968, was helping protect Brattlebrook Park. Since then we've protected the Boulders, and Mahanna Cobble here in the city, and there's much more to come."

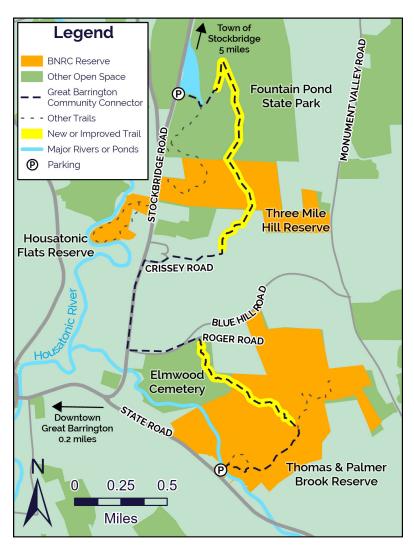
The name "Cadwell's Woods" isn't new—Durwin found it used as far back as the early 1900s. Now, this beloved patch of nature, enjoyed informally for generations, is officially a city conservation area. It's here for peaceful walks, birdwatching, and yes . . . maybe even a little mischief.



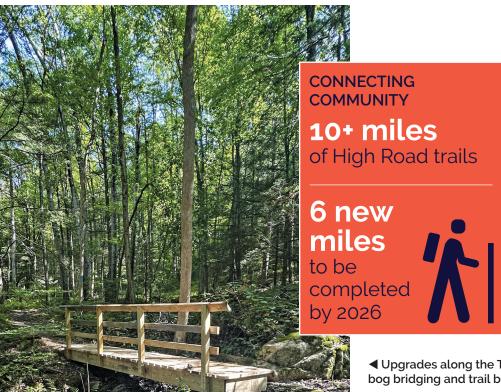
A NEW STEP FORWARD: THE HIGH ROAD HEADS TO GREAT BARRINGTON

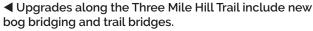
The High Road is all about connection—linking trails to trails, trails to towns, and people to nature. Since 2016, BNRC has been building this vision, starting with a trail along Yokun Ridge that connects from Pittsfield to Lenox and Richmond, and into town parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and local neighborhoods.

In early summer 2026, BNRC plans to open the Great Barrington Community Connector, a new stretch of the High Road that will run between Fountain Pond State Park along Route 7 and BNRC's Thomas & Palmer Brook Reserve. This "green corridor" will weave through lands owned by Berkshire South Regional Community Center, BNRC, and the Town of Great Barrington—making it a true community effort.













Thanks to nearly \$60,000 in Community Preservation Act funding from the Town of Great Barrington since 2023, progress is well underway. BNRC crews have replaced old bog bridges, built new trail sections by hand and with machines, and crafted sturdy stonework in rugged spots. The Greenagers, a local environmental youth organization, brought their skill and energy to the project, creating rock-armored sections in Thomas & Palmer Brook Reserve.

When complete, the Great Barrington Community Connector will give residents and visitors a beautiful new way to travel between town and nature—whether for a peaceful walk, a scenic workout, or simply to enjoy the Berkshire landscape.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Partnerships are building healthier communities for nature and humans.

"The Francis Avenue parklet is a reminder of what's possible when design is rooted in community. Each conversation reinforces how much this project is needed and valued. Even in this early phase, it reflects a truly collaborative effort and a shared vision for connection, rest, and belonging."

-BRITNEY DANIALS, PLANNING STAFF BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (BRPC)

Francis Avenue Parklet: Clearing the Way for Community Access

What a difference a day makes! In mid-June 2025, BNRC volunteers, community members and BRPC staff rolled up their sleeves to tackle invasive knotweed at the Francis Avenue Parklet. Their efforts opened sightlines, improved safety, and built on years of collaboration to restore this important connection for Jubilee Hill residents.

The Francis Avenue stairwell has been a community priority since 2020, when local leaders first raised concerns about its crumbling steps, erosion, and safety hazards. Over time, the City of Pittsfield and BRPC secured funding to repair railings, add lighting, create a small sitting area, and improve stormwater management. BNRC's recent workday focused on the next step: removing invasives to reclaim the hillside and make the parklet more welcoming.

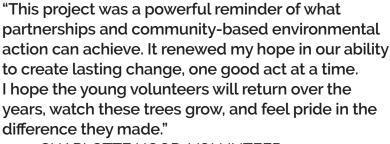
Looking ahead, partners will explore hillside engineering and potential redesigns, guided by the voices of the community.





"Large projects like this take a long time to bear visible fruit. Behind every new feature at the Francis Avenue outlook were hours of community conversations, equipment purchases, negotiations with property holders, and all the logistics that go into the installation of a single feature like a bench. It is so gratifying to see this area slowly activate as more community-desired changes are brought to completion."

—JAYMIF ZAPATA OF BRPC



-CHARLOTTE HOOD, VOLUNTEER AND OUTREACH MANAGER AT BNRC



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

790+ annual program participants 15 self-guided trail activities

"The River Project promotes collaboration between schools and community organizations with the aim to create more access to opportunities for stewardship, appreciation, and awareness of land and waterways. The Housatonic Flats workday, organized by BNRC, gave us the chance to improve our local watershed by planting trees and removing invasive species. With the expert guidance of Charlotte Hood, we got our hands dirty learning about native trees and plants and working together for a good cause."

-STEPHANIE GRAHAM, TEACHER AT MOUNT EVERETT

Native Tree Planting at Housatonic Flats

In May, BNRC volunteers came together to restore the banks of the Housatonic River by planting native trees and shrubs strengthening both the ecosystem and our community.

Led by Stephanie Graham, art teacher at Mount Everett Regional School and founder of the River Project, local organizations joined forces to create initiatives centered on caring for the river. BNRC contributed access to the Housatonic Flats reserve and coordinated volunteers, paving the way for a successful workday.

Thanks to DCR's Woodland Watershed Regeneration program, BNRC received 30 free native trees and shrubs perfectly suited for the floodplains of Housatonic Flats. Volunteers of all ages helped plant these trees which will provide long-lasting benefits to the river and its surrounding habitat for years to come.

THE TOM BALL MOUNTAIN RESERVE OPENED IN JUNE

Collaborators and partners celebrated with BNRC

Photos: Tucker Bair Photography













1. Dr. Eve Schlüter (Deputy Director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife), Jenny Hansell (BNRC President), Casey Pease (Office of Senator Paul Mark), John Mancia (BNRC Board Vice Chair) 2. A selection of BNRC staff members 3. Karen Coy Ross (BNRC Board) speaks with Ed Neumuth (BNRC volunteer and donor) 4. Guests enjoy cocktail hour 5. Guests listen to BNRC Board of Directors Vice Chair, John Mancia 6. Peter Milanese (Department of Fish & Game), Narain Schroeder (former BNRC Conservation Director who began the Tom Ball Mountain project) 7. Jenny Hansell (BNRC President) speaking with donors Warren and Laura Kerper











8. Steve Cunningham (BNRC Board of Directors) and Jenny Hansell (BNRC President) 9. A crowded parking lot for Tom Ball Mountain Reserve's opening weekend 10. Tim Crane (former BNRC Board chair) talking with Chris and Tracy Johnson (BNRC's President's Advisory Circle and donors) 11. Hikers at Tom Ball Mountain Reserve 12. Visitors to the reserve make a DIY walking stick



FROM ONF HIKE TO A LIFELONG CONNECTION

If you've joined a BNRC hike, pitched in on a volunteer day, or celebrated a new trail opening, chances are you've met John and Kate Kidd. As longtime donors, reserve volunteers, and hike leaders—including Spanish-speaking hikes they've become a big part of the BNRC family. This summer, John even brought his guitar to the Tom Ball Mountain Reserve opening to serenade hikers along the trail.

Their BNRC story began in 2017, when they took an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute hiking class led by BNRC. They fell in love with the wellbuilt, well-cared-for trails and quickly looked for ways to give back.

"BNRC offers places where we experience renewal while being outdoors. Some of our most valued friendships have been developed and deepened on BNRC trails."

-JOHN AND KATE KIDD

The Kidds offered their time and energy to BNRC, pulling invasive plants on workdays, and John took on his first assignment as a reserve volunteer at The Boulders in Pittsfield. One hike led to another, and soon John was volunteering at two more trails—including a stretch of the High Road in Lenox.

For John and Kate, BNRC is about more than trails. It's about community. They share BNRC's mission to protect the Berkshires' special places

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED 700+ volunteer hours served annually

> and ensure everyone has access to them. Leading hikes in Spanish has been especially meaningful for John, who has spent much of his life working in Spanish-speaking communities.

Their favorite hikes? The challenging and scenic stretch of the High Road from Mahanna Cobble to Lenox Mountain, and Basin Pond, with its rich history, glacial boulders, and sweeping views. They say each season brings something new even on the same trail.

One unforgettable memory is from a winter hike on the Charcoal Trail after an ice storm, when every branch, leaf, and rock was coated in glistening ice. "It was like walking through a crystal palace," they recall. For the Kidds, BNRC offers a way to renew their spirits outdoors while giving back to the community. It's also given them friendships they treasure. The Kidd's advice to anyone thinking about getting involved?

"Do it!" 🧨





LEAVING A LEGACY FOR THE BERKSHIRES

Back in the late 1990s, Corinne and Rachel began looking for a place to build a second home. Rachel had studied at UMass Amherst and knew the Berkshires well. Weekend trips soon turned into something bigger: they fell in love with the region's beauty, its endless trails and waterways, and the rich arts and cultural life. Before long, they built a home in Monterey.

"The more time we spent in the Berkshires, the more it felt like our true home," Corinne and Rachel shared. "With all the pressures on the environment, we felt it was essential to support the organizations protecting it."

By 2022, both had retired and moved here full-time. They soon became advocates and donors supporting BNRC's important work—helping conserve open spaces, protect wildlife corridors, and make the outdoors more welcoming and accessible to everyone.

"We feel a deep connection to BNRC's mission of conservation, stewardship, and community."

"We feel a deep connection to BNRC's mission of conservation. stewardship, and community."

-CORINNE HEYES AND RACHEL RIVIN

In 2024, Corinne and Rachel took another step to protect the place they love. As they finalized their estate plan, they made a bequest to BNRC ensuring their commitment to the Berkshires would last for generations.

"We wanted to help BNRC continue conserving and caring for the land, while enriching the community that calls it home."

By making this decision, Corinne and Rachel became members of BNRC's Schist & Marble Society. This special group, founded in 2014, honors those who include BNRC in their wills or estate plans.

The name reflects the very foundation of the Berkshires: Schist—the rugged, ancient bedrock of the ridgelines. Marble—the softer stone in the valleys that supports the area's rare diversity of plants and animals.

Together, they represent the balance of strength and care that defines this region—and the legacy members of the Schist & Marble Society help protect.

Why Bequests Matter

Bequests are more than gifts. They are promises to future generations. They ensure that the Berkshires' forests, rivers, wildlife, and open spaces will remain protected, healthy, and accessible for years to come.

Everyone who makes a bequest—no matter the size—helps safeguard the lands and waters that make the Berkshires extraordinary.

Join Corinne, Rachel, and others in leaving a lasting legacy, visit bnrc.org/donate.



BNRC is deeply grateful for our amazing community of supporters.

Your generosity, volunteer spirit, and dedication make everything we do possible. From conserving forests and farmlands, to protecting wildlife, to ensuring free access to trails and programs, every success starts with you.

Donors listed generously support BNRC with gifts of \$1,000 or more annually.

Ginny Akabane Stephen Alsdorf & Lisa Nelson Amalgamated Charitable American Endowment Foundation Anonymous (5) Arbella Protection Insurance Company AYCO Charitable Foundation Deborah L. Balmuth & Colin D. Harrington Bank of America Martin Baron Berkshire Community College Foundation Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Phyllis & Paul Berz Peter Bray & Bridget Reel Callahan Dee Family Foundation Callie & Tammy Camillo Karen Carmean C.C. Cave & Peter Rothstein James & Marietta Cawse Heather Chapman & Andrew Sucov

City of Pittsfield John & Linda Clarke Cloud Mountain Foundation Sara Cofrin Walsh & Alan Walsh Judy Cohen Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston Commonwealth of Massachusetts Donna Conforti & Paul Rissman Bonnie Costello & Frank Cespedes John Cowl Tim & Patty Crane David Crane & Ruth Blodgett Robert Cundall & Daniel Bross DAFgiving360 Michael David & Lauren Mitchell Danielle DeMaio & Michael Paskin Sue & Bill Dunlaevy David R. Dutra Donna Eckhardt W. Eric Egan Juliet Emery **Eversource Energy** Nancy & Fred Fagelman Brian H. & Vicki Fairbank

Farmor Foundation

Carol Freidman Benno Friedman Jonna Gaberman & Bruce Wintman Monique & N. Richard Gershon Jennifer Gilbert & John Ellersick Wendy & Peter Gordon Jeffrey H. & Marion Hanny Grant Len & Barbara Gray Dustin & Gale Griffin Guardian Life Insurance Company of America Eric & Cathy Haines Ellen M. Hand & Scott M. Hand Sandy Hansell & Raina Ernstoff Holly Hardman Corinne Heyes & Rachel Rivin John J. & Carrie C. Hitt Caroline Holland & Sam Russo Lucy Holland Homestead Foundation, Inc.

Brian Horan & Annie Maurer

Fidelity Charitable Giving Account

Nancy Fitzpatrick

& Lincoln Russell

Susan & Henry Flint

Hot Plate Brewing Co. Geoffrey C. Hughes Foundation, Inc. Jewish Communal Fund Chris & Tracy Johnson Laura & Eric Jordahl Joseph Kahan & Claudia Davidoff Bill & Kelly Kaiser Katharine L. W. & Winthrop M. Crane, 3d Charitable Foundation Eric Katzman & Melissa Elstein Laura & Warren Kerper Don & Gay Kimelman Nancy King Chris & Nancy Kittredge Abram & Debra Klein **KMD** Foundation **Knight Foundation** Andrew & Elizabeth Kriegman Larry Lane & Susan Lyman Paul LeBlanc Lee Bank Louise N. Lieblich Nina & John Lipkowitz Daniel Bedford Lippman Stuart & Laura Litwin

Schist & Marble **Society Members**

as of July 29, 2025

Ginny Akabane & George Darey* Anonymous (4) William E. Briggs Nick Del Greco & Sarah Atchley John DeVillars & Gunnel Clarke David R. Dutra Laurily K. Epstein* Mr. & Mrs. Shepley W. Evans Kevin Fallon Foggy River Fund Estate of Philip A. Foster* E. Bayard* & Alice Halsted* Paula M. Hatch Fay Henry' Corinne Heyes & Rachel Rivin Stephanie Marie Higgins Marc Hughes John & Katherine Kidd Nancy King Wendy T. Linscott* Travis & Justin McCarthy Megan Reisel Nancy and Rick Richardson Brian Rod Karen & Jeffrey Ross Kim Seward & Jake Laughner Syd & Mundi Smithers Ken Stahl & Shirley Ripullone Mary Stevenson Thieme* Roberta Hope Waller Pam Weatherbee Edward & Marsha Weiner Peter Elijah Wootton*

*deceased

Schist & Marble Society Members have made a bequest commitment. See article page 13.

Lee Lockwood Rebecca Lord Jack, Sam & Jake Lyons John & Linda Mancia John & Ada Masiero Lyn & Ron Mason Mass Audubon 30X30 Catalyst Fund Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment **Affairs** James & Mary Maxymillian Elizabeth & Robin McGraw Margaret McTeigue & Thomas Wessel Mill Town Foundation, Inc. Ellen Miller Mirival Berkshires Margot S. & William R. Moomaw J.P. Morgan Charitable Fund Martin J. Mullen James & Elizabeth Murray Seth & Mary Nash National Philanthropic Trust Ed Neumuth

Dana & Lukasz Niedzielska

Northeast Wilderness Trust Karen O'Donnell & Peter Sheffer Elton Ogden & Jan Salzer-Ogden Anna Oliver & Stephan Klein Dan & Marcia Parnell Carol Parrish & Paul Clark Pittsfield Sportsman's Club Larry & Dina Port Ed Potter & Regina Olchowski Anthony Radice & Patricia Crown Ellen F. Rawson Raymond James Charitable Renaissance Charitable Nancy & Rick Richardson Richmond Land Trust Zach Rissman Eileen & Rob Rominger Karen & Jeffrey Ross Keith Ross Neil Schluger Sukey Schroeder Charles T. Schulze Schwab Charitable Richard & Carol Seltzer Honey Sharp & David Lippman Gerald A.

& Olga Khorkova Sherman Richard Slocum Richard & Alyson Slutzky Mark Smith & John O'Keefe Syd & Mundi Smithers Carol & Irv Smokler Stifel Charitable Taylor Staubach Betsy Strauch Charles & Roz Stuzin Benjamin & Lauren Svenson Chuck Szymanski & Amy Walter Deborah & David Tancredi James & Caroline Taylor The Bafflin Foundation The Boston Foundation The Feigenbaum Foundation The Institute for Wild Med The Nature Conservancy The Nion Robert Thieriot

Foundation The Pass Ileen & Mike Thelen TIFF Charitable Foundation Brian Tobin & Bill Short Zachary Tolbert **Robin Tost** Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation

Act Fund Judith Uman & Michael Goodman U.S. Charitable Gift Trust Michael J. van Itallie

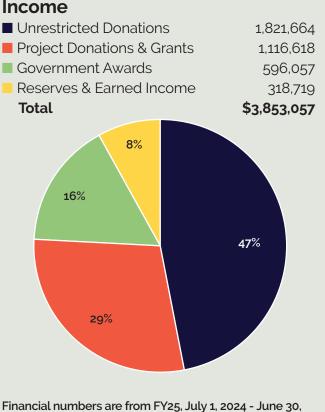
van Itallie Foundation Vanguard Charitable Mark Vanhoenacker & Mark Jones David Venarde & Sarah Horowitz Pam Weatherbee

Westminster Barrington Foundation

Daryl Wickstrom

& Steve Cunningham Benna & Harold Wilde Wyncote Foundation Drs. Munirih & Krishna Yeshwant Dale M. Zola

Expenses Community Engagement 214,684 Administration 472,919 Land Conservation* 1,658,629 Development/Fundraising 565,216 ■ Stewardship & Public Access 944,769 **Total** \$3,856,217 5% 12% 25% 15% 43% *Funds expended on land acquisitions: \$1,250,000



2025, and are unaudited. For audited financials please

contact the BNRC office or visit www.bnrc.org.



309 Pittsfield Road, Suite B Lenox, MA 01240

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 130
Pittsfield, MA





