

NORTHEAST



WILDERNESS  
TRUST

Conserving  
Forever-Wild Landscapes  
for Nature and People

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*There is a relationship between beauty and life, ugliness and the diminishment of life.  
Beauty is a marker of vitality; it is our way of describing encounters with  
life-affirmative patterns of relationships. —Sandra Lubarsky*

December 2011

Dear friend of the wilderness,

This morning I watched flocks of snow geese fly overhead, their shifting V's set against a blue sky and a riot of fall color lighting up the woods around me. Now, while I can't say which of the many wilderness values captures your heart and head, or whether you'll choose to support the Northeast Wilderness Trust's conservation work by responding to this letter, I can tell you what motivates me to volunteer as a board member, to donate time and money to the organization, and to feel good about asking friends, family, and fellow conservationists to give, too: **Beauty.**

The Wilderness Trust has highlighted beauty as a key value of wilderness areas in our communications through the years. (Some forms of beauty, increasingly rare and precious kinds, are found only in places unfettered by humans.) But mostly we talk about why forever-wild lands are crucial as habitat, sustain biodiversity, promote ecological integrity, and sequester carbon to help counter climate change.

In short, we emphasize science, not ethics or aesthetics. But all are important, and I've noticed that people who care about wilderness and are active in the land trust movement often have a deep connection to natural beauty. It touches them. I know it moves me.

All of the Northeast Wilderness Trust's 18 protected properties, every single acre of the more than 8,000 acres of conservation land we've secured since the organization's founding, perpetuate beauty. No, not Yosemite Valley-type spectacles, but wild woods and waters typical of our region where life-affirming patterns of relationships may flourish and evolve in nature's own good time, uninterrupted by logging, motors, and other unnatural disturbances.

It was no accident that the great Aldo Leopold spoke of "integrity, stability, and beauty" in the same breath when articulating his famous land ethic. These things are related.

With every land protection project we complete, the Wilderness Trust works to conserve landscapes that will remain whole and healthy—"whole" and "health" descend from the same root word, "hale"—and will exude beauty forever.

This is work that matters, that has real, sustaining value. In its first decade, the Northeast Wilderness Trust has proven itself to be a lean, effective organization with a track record of success completing land conservation projects from the Adirondacks to Maine.\*

**Your support is vital to keeping the Wilderness Trust whole and healthy** as an organization, able to assist landowners with their conservation objectives and develop new wilderness protection initiatives across the region. We depend on you to continue this crucial work.

**Real places. Real protection.** If that's a mission that rings true with you, please give generously today. And before writing that check (or making a convenient online donation!) think about a wild place you know and love, a place that has enriched your life with spiritual renewal or aesthetic refreshment. The particulars may be different, but conserving such places is the gift of wildness that the Wilderness Trust is passing along to future generations with every acre saved.

With gratitude for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Butler  
President of the Board of Directors

\* I know it's typical for an annual appeal letter to talk about recent successes and exciting current projects. Yep, we've got those stories to tell; please check out our revamped website at [www.newwildernesstrust.org](http://www.newwildernesstrust.org) or our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/newwildernesstrust](http://www.facebook.com/newwildernesstrust) to read about them. Or email [jennifer@newwildernesstrust.org](mailto:jennifer@newwildernesstrust.org) to request a copy of our annual report.