



**VERMONT  
HUTS ASSOCIATION**

# **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Our Year in Review. Your Support in Action.**

## **MISSION**

Vermont Huts Association's mission is to foster a deeper appreciation of our natural environment and strengthen Vermont's communities by providing enriching and immersive outdoor experiences for all.

## **VISION**

Offering a cohesive, year-round statewide trail and hut/hostel network for public benefit across a diverse set of user groups.

## **VALUES**

- Creating new stewards of the land through guests, members, programming, and best practices
- Intentionally breaking down barriers to entry to outdoor recreation for underrepresented communities and individuals
- Providing a sustainable boost to rural communities' economies
- Positioning Vermont as a leader in outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and inclusivity

# DEAR FRIENDS OF VERMONT HUTS,

First and foremost, thank you. Thank you for your time volunteering, for sharing your memories with us in our huts, for participating in our fundraising party and online raffle. Thank you for being an integral part of increasing outdoor recreation opportunities in Vermont.

As we reflect on the past year of programming, construction, and planning for the future, we're thrilled to share how we've moved our mission forward in line with our values - thanks to your help!

The highlights shared here are only part of the picture. We look forward to continuing to write the story of Vermont Huts, one adventure at a time.



RJ Thompson, Executive Director



# BY THE NUMBERS

**560 VHA members**

**12 Huts in network**

- Huts in our network have hosted over **10,000 guests** to date
- Chittenden Brook Hut hosted over **1,300 guests** in 2022
- **81%** of all hut guests in 2022 were Vermonters
- **16 Vermont Students** attended FOREST Program retreats free of charge

**1 New hut** built in 2022

- **6 Vermonters** received on-the-job training building Grout Pond Hut in partnership with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps



# VELOMONT TRAIL COLLECTIVE

In 2022 a Joint Venture was formed between Vermont Huts Association and Velomont Trail Collective (VTC) to catalyze the construction of the country's largest hut supported trail network, linking existing networks, connecting communities, and bolstering local economies. In 2022 VTC hired a full time Executive Director and, together, the organizations brought on two Project Coordinators.

# VERMONT YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS



*Left: VYCC Build Crew  
at Grout Pond Hut,  
Summer 2022*

# PARTNERSHIPS



**VERMONT  
YOUTH  
CONSERVATION  
CORPS**



VERMONT MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOC.  
SINCE  1997

**CATAMOUNT  
TRAIL  
ASSOCIATION**



   
**VERMONT  
ADAPTIVE  
Ski & Sports**



**TRUST FOR  
PUBLIC  
LAND™**

# CONSERVATION

**Environmental stewardship is a critical piece of VHA and VTC's strategic vision. The Trust for Public Land, one of our nonprofit partners, has identified 214,000 acres of unprotected land within the Velomont Trail and Vermont Huts corridor between Canada and Massachusetts, presenting an opportunity for recreation to catalyze conservation on a statewide level.**

**Both VHA and VTC have been engaging private landowners in conversations about ways in which they can be a part of conserving their surrounding resources, protecting the Velomont Trail and Vermont Huts network in perpetuity. This will not only guarantee public access to the network for generations to come, but also play a key role in protecting the valuable climate resilience corridor for species migration as temperatures rise.**

**Conserving as much land as possible at the outset of our project can help to slow forest fragmentation and protect large tracts of remote land from future subdivision and development where it could have negative environmental impacts.**

# FOREST Program

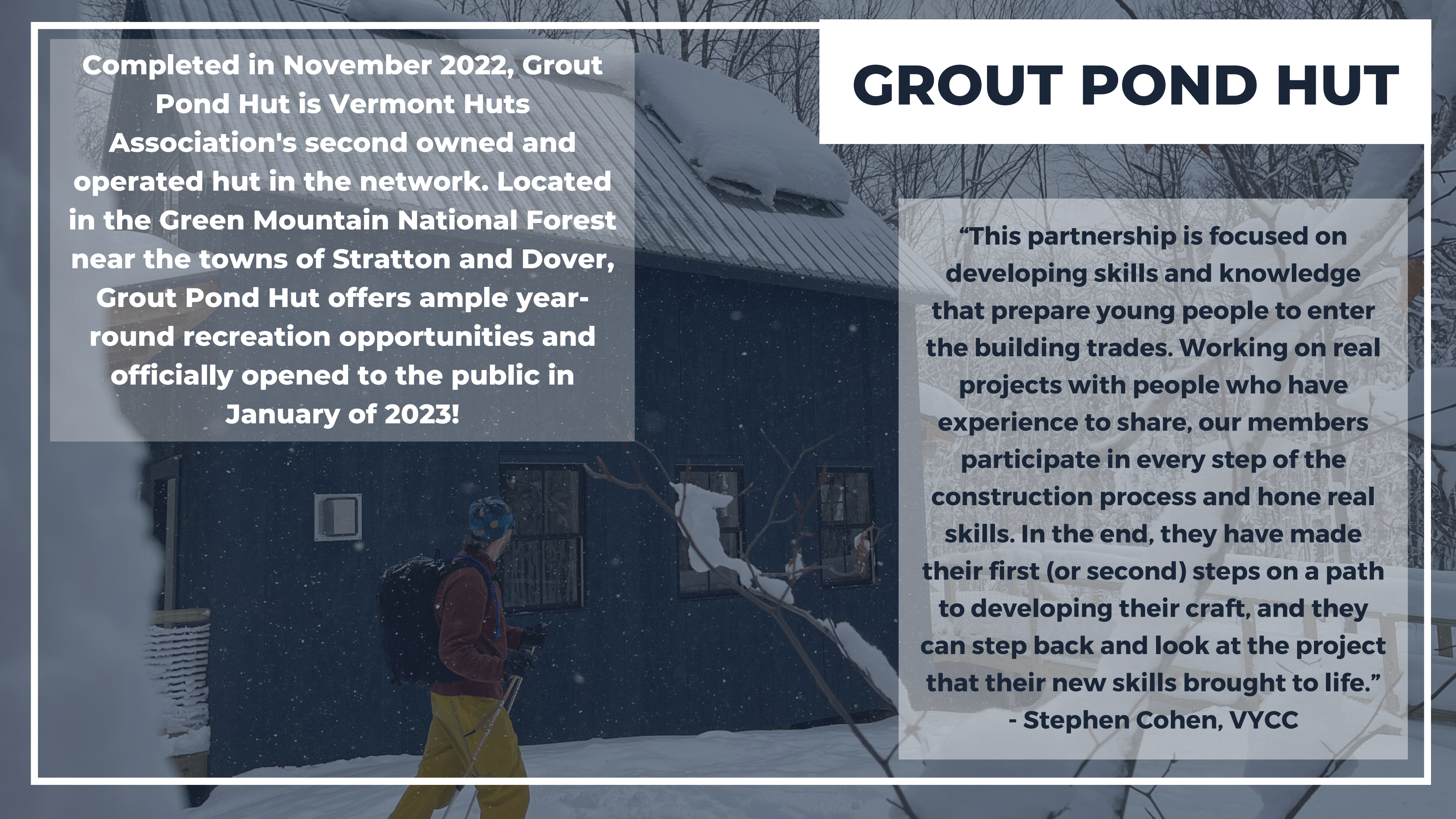
VHA's FOREST (Fostering Outdoor Recreation, Education, Sustainability, and Teamwork) Program provides a new point of access to the outdoors for underrepresented individuals. The program partners with organizations around the state to offer two-day, two-night guided adventures completely free of charge.

Each trip is complete with equipment, team-building/problem solving exercises, natural history workshops, overview of the surrounding ecosystem, and an opportunity to explore the surrounding trail network. This is a year-round program that grows exponentially as we expand our network and comes at no cost to participants.

Special thanks to **Outdoor Gear Exchange** for a 2022 grant to stock our gear closet with two fleets of snowshoes for participants and guides to use during winter retreats!



*In 2022, VHA partnered with The Teen Center (Middlebury) and Kingdom East School District (Lyndon Center)*

A person wearing a blue beanie, a brown jacket, and yellow pants with a black backpack is standing in a snowy field. In the background is a dark blue building with a corrugated metal roof covered in snow. There are several windows on the building. The scene is set in a winter landscape with snow-covered ground and trees.

**Completed in November 2022, Grout Pond Hut is Vermont Huts Association's second owned and operated hut in the network. Located in the Green Mountain National Forest near the towns of Stratton and Dover, Grout Pond Hut offers ample year-round recreation opportunities and officially opened to the public in January of 2023!**

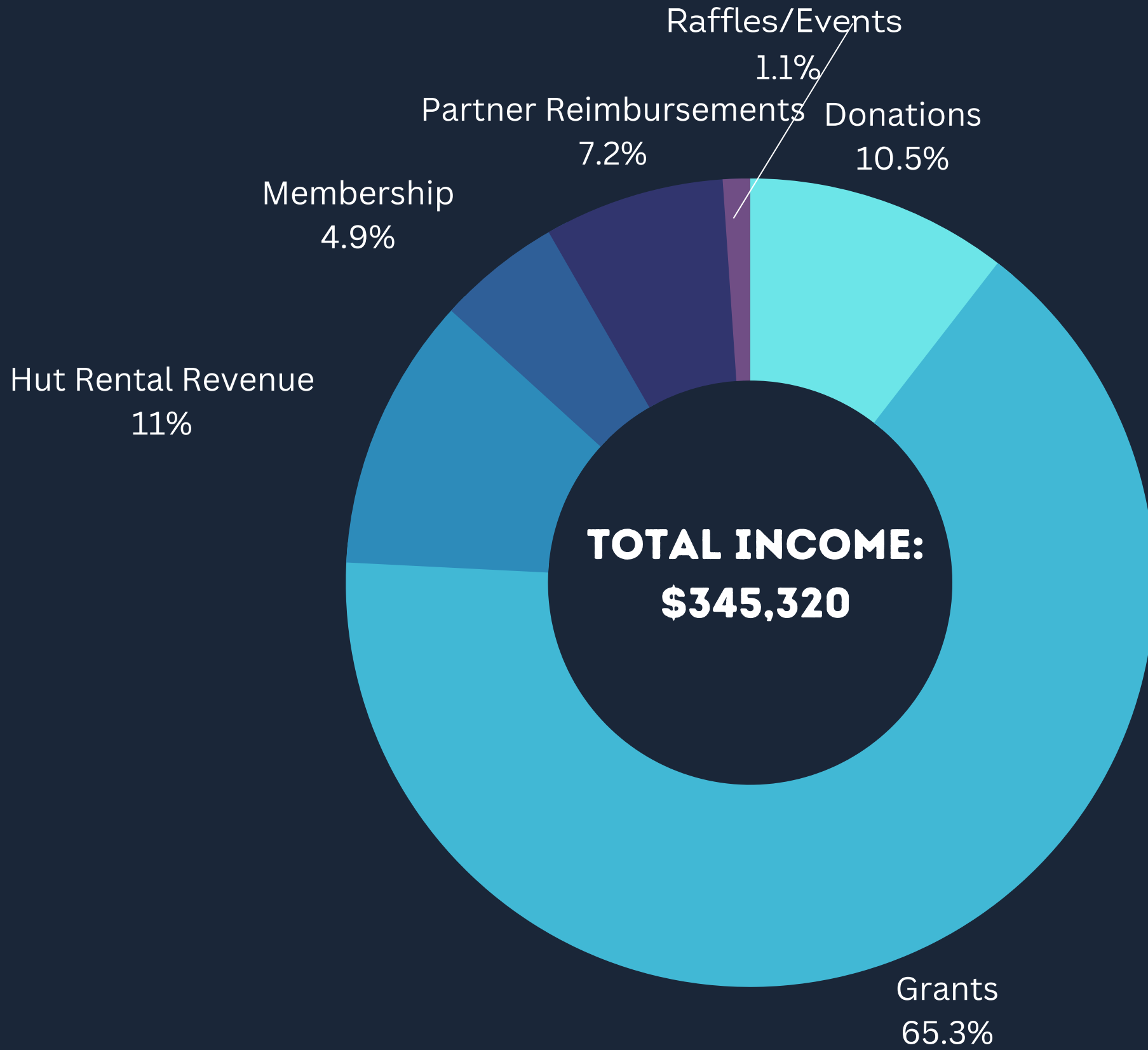
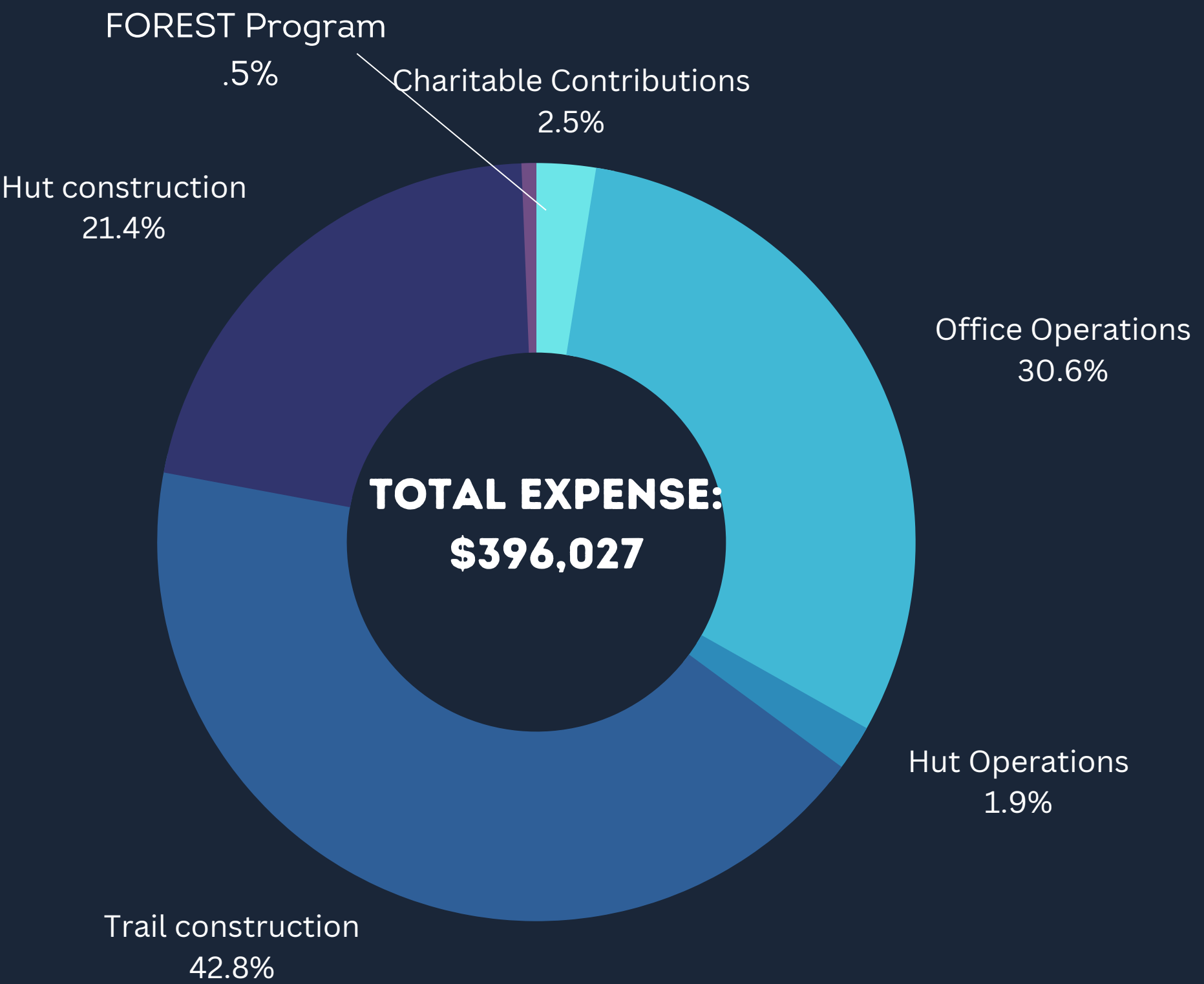
# **GROUT POND HUT**

**“This partnership is focused on developing skills and knowledge that prepare young people to enter the building trades. Working on real projects with people who have experience to share, our members participate in every step of the construction process and hone real skills. In the end, they have made their first (or second) steps on a path to developing their craft, and they can step back and look at the project that their new skills brought to life.”**

**- Stephen Cohen, VYCC**



# OVERALL FINANCIALS



In 2022 Vermont Huts increased staff capacity and started construction on Grout Pond Hut. Though a loss is shown in the 2022 financial statements, we are beginning to see project reimbursements from our federal grants, and 2023 also kicks off a two-year fundraising campaign.

# Our Supporters



## FUNDRAISING

*Grants, individual giving, fundraising events, and raffles provide essential support for staff and projects, ensuring that we are able to fulfill our mission of providing enriching and immersive outdoor experiences for all.*

- In 2022, Vermont Huts secured \$3.8 million in Congressionally Directed Spending to support the construction of 10 huts and 5 hostels throughout the state of Vermont. Highly restricted and requiring matching funds, this earmark makes it even more important for VHA to raise unrestricted funding in 2023 and to unlock these federal dollars.

# LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next two years, VHA's priorities include:

- Constructing six new huts
- Planning and permitting for an additional four huts
- Connect a total of 11 towns to the network with 49 miles of new or improved trail, in partnership with VTC
- Engage young adults in hut building through our partnership with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps
- Expanding the FOREST Program to new demographics and geographical areas



## **Vermont Huts Staff**

**RJ Thompson**, Executive Director

**Dani Kehlmann**, Development Director

**Dan Hallberg**, Project Coordinator

**Jordan Rowell**, Project Coordinator

**Maggie Twitchell**, Program & Communications  
Coordinator

## **Vermont Huts Board of Directors**

Berne Broudy, Julia Bunting, Mike Donohue, Jamey  
Fidel, Liz Gleason, David Goodman, Chris Quinn

## **With Special Thanks**

To all VHA volunteers past and present (and future!):  
we couldn't do it without you!

# **MEET THE TEAM**

