



Annual Report



“I am proud of the work that Vermont Huts Association is doing to help more people, of all abilities, to spend more time on Vermont trails all year round.”

- FORMER SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY



MISSION

To foster a deeper appreciation for 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

2023 AT A GLANCE



22,000

Guests at the 15 huts
in our network

more notes on guests per hut on page 5



361

Members supporting
our mission



18

Donated hut nights

(8 forest program, 10 to other nonprofits)



24

New miles of trail
constructed and improved



2

new huts in the network
(Grout Pond and Gale's
Retreat)



4

FOREST Retreats



17

local, state, and
federal grants won

more financial details on page 8



1

Short film produced



6

New board members



19

full and part-time jobs
working on huts and
trails around Vermont





DEAR FRIENDS OF VERMONT HUTS,

The recipe for success in the Green Mountain State - whether developing a new trail and hut network or coming together in response to July's historic flood events - has always been the cultivation of strong relationships that promote a high level of collaboration, teamwork, and "we've got this" attitude. Indeed, a call for assistance in Vermont, regardless of the task, is likely to result in many hands making light work.

It's because of that mentality we were able to achieve so much last year. In January 2023 Grout Pond Hut opened, doubling our capacity to host the FOREST Program, welcoming underrepresented community members into our huts free of charge. We also brought a new partner hut, Gale's Retreat, into the network, creating a family-friendly opportunity on the Birds of Vermont Museum's property.

Our partnership with Velomont Trail Collective led to the completion of 24 miles of new and improved trails, including - in collaboration with Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports and Vermont Mountain Bike Association - an adaptive-friendly section directly adjacent to our flagship hut at Chittenden Brook. The dream of a trail connecting remote backcountry experiences to the center of town is now a reality in Rochester, and that's just the beginning.

In 2024 we anticipate breaking ground on a backcountry hut in Waterbury, a hostel along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail in Hardwick, and another hostel in Randolph along the Velomont Trail. Yep, huts and hostels! After all, trail users will need an affordable place to stay when they come into town for a night or two.

When Vermont Huts launched nearly eight years ago, we set out on a path to create new points of access to the outdoors for various user groups. Building on the decades of hard work and accomplishments our partners in recreation have achieved, we are realizing our mission of fostering a deeper appreciation for our natural environment by creating an enriching and immersive outdoor experience for everyone. Our progress in 2023 reflects the hard work of our staff, volunteers, land managers, and the numerous local trail organizations who make Vermont's outdoor spaces some of the best in the world.

With deep gratitude,

2023 INDIVIDUAL IMPACT REPORTS

Chittenden Brook Hut

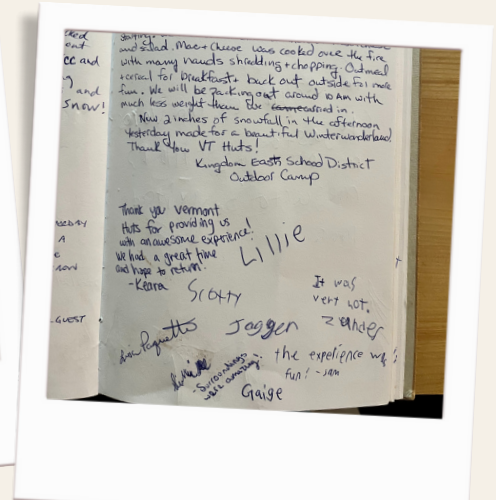
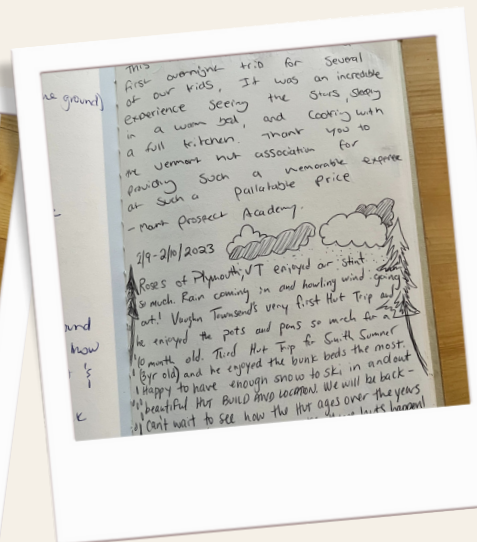
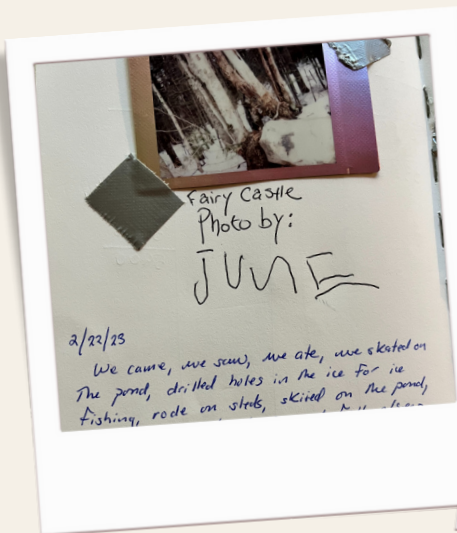


1,302
guests

Grout Pond Hut



1,014
guests



FOREST PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Offering trail and hut retreats to help increase access to outdoor recreation for historically marginalized communities.



Thanks to our friends at **Reeno Foundation** for sponsoring one retreat each year in partnership with Kingdom East School District!



Thank you to **Wells Fargo Foundation** and the **George W. Mergens Foundation** for supporting the FOREST Program in 2023 and beyond.



Thank you to our friends at **Gordini Gloves** and **Turtle Fur** for donating winter gear items for our FOREST Participants!



LOOKING FORWARD

FOREST has big goals in 2024, including:

- Adding a minimum of **three new nonprofit partners** to the program
- **Tripling the amount of free hut nights** offered to participants and partners
- **Creating a short video** to promote the program statewide
- Hiring **experienced, diverse, enthusiastic** outdoor guides and educators

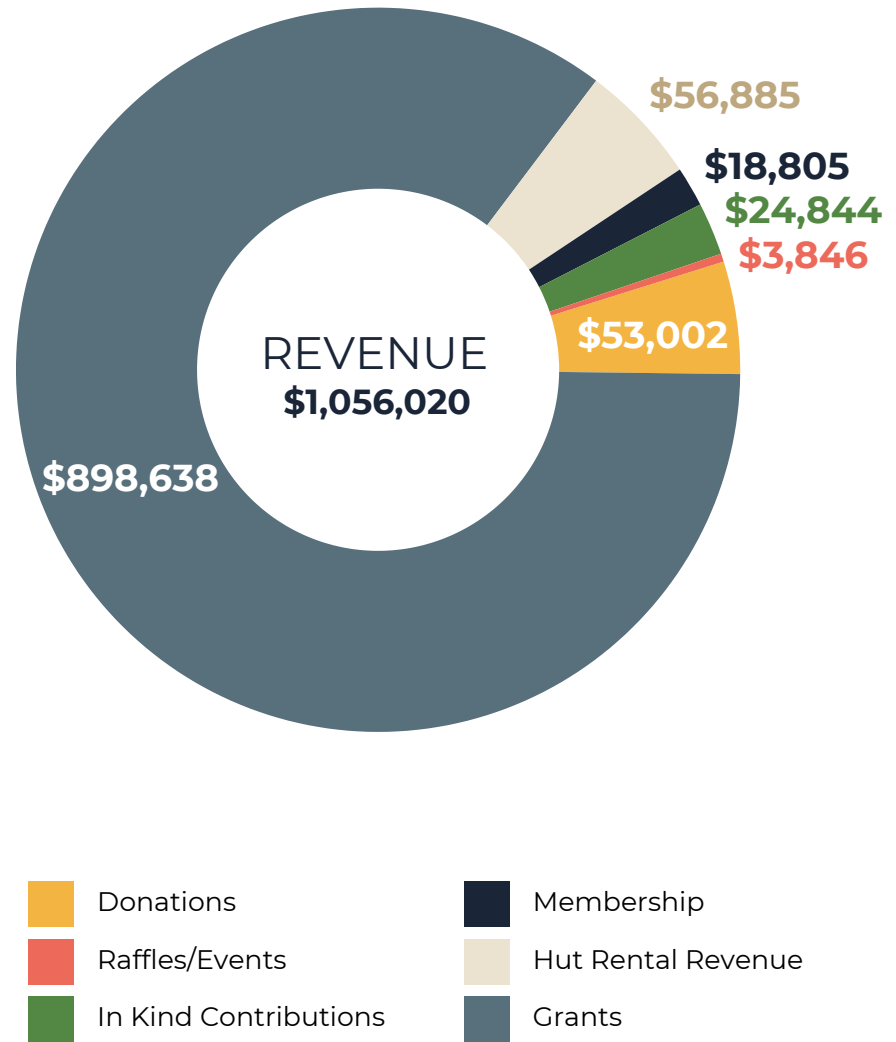
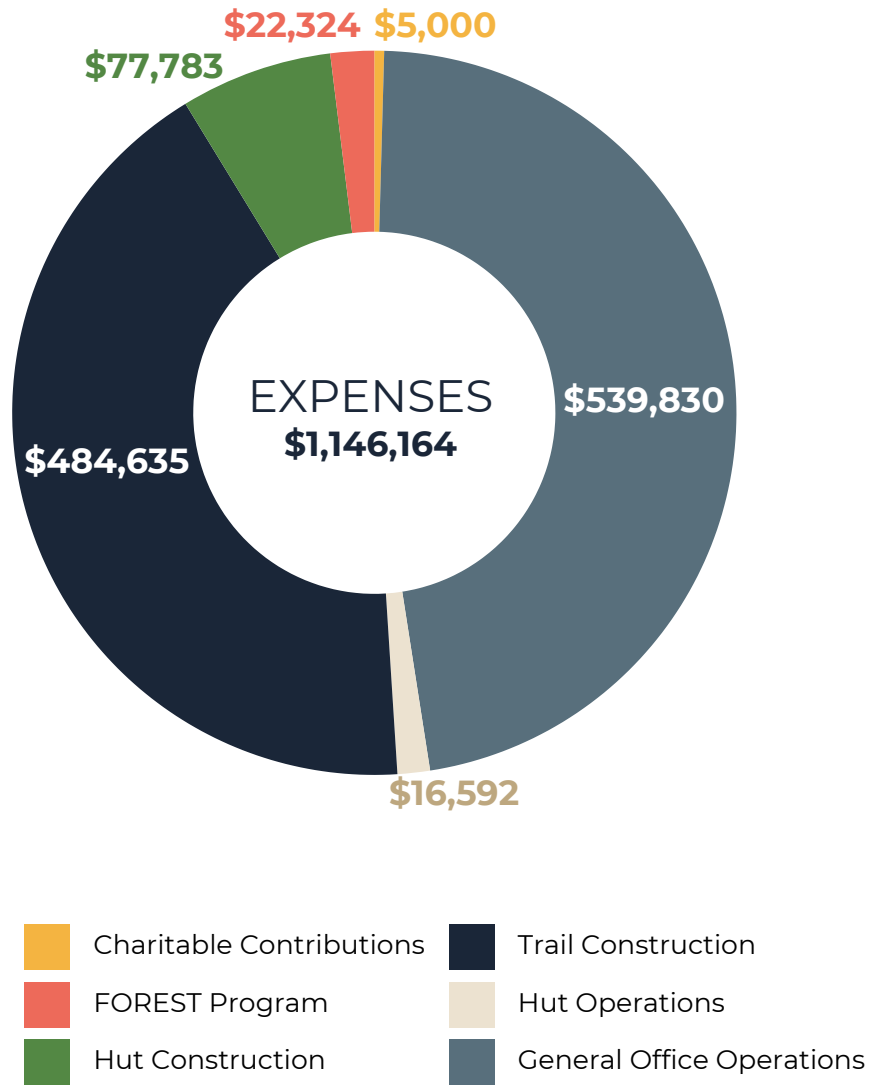


WHAT'S TO COME IN 2024

We're proud of all the work we've done alongside our partners in 2023 and equally as excited about what's to come in 2024. Here's a sneak peek at what to expect next year:

- 
- Breaking ground on **two** new downtown hostels
 - Starting construction on a **new backcountry hut**
 - Planning and permitting for an **additional four huts**
 - Building or improving **more than 15 miles** of trail with a focus on adaptive-friendly segments
 - Engaging young adults in hut/hostel building through our partnership with **Vermont Youth Conservation Corps** and **Resource YouthBuild**
 - Hosting a minimum of **20 free hut nights** through our FOREST Program
 - Conducting **member and guest surveys** to improve our programs and services

FINANCIALS



Note: A small loss is reflected in accounts as of 12/31/2023 due to pending grant reimbursements and slightly lower than expected philanthropic giving.

OUR TEAM

Vermont Huts Staff

RJ Thompson, Executive Director

Angus McCusker, Vermont Trail Director

Dani Kehlmann, Development Director

Jordan Rowell, Project Manager

Dan Halberg, Project Manager

Maggie Twitchell, Program and Communications Coordinator



In 2024 the Board of Directors grew by **six new members**, bringing a wealth of experience from construction to law and fundraising to community service.

We are so lucky to have such dedicated and passionate individuals working to increase access to recreation in Vermont. If you're interested in volunteering with VHA, email info@vermonthuts.org.

Board of Directors

(Chair) Mike Donohue - Outdoor Gear Exchange; Richmond, VT

(Treasurer) Liz Gleason - Vermont Housing and Conservation; Waterbury Center, VT

(Secretary) Julia Bunting - Burlington, VT

Berne Broudy - Writer, Photographer; Richmond, VT

Jamey Fidel - Vermont Natural Resources Council; Montpelier, VT

David Goodman - Author; Waterbury, VT

Cate Starmer - Waterbury Center, VT

Matthew Mole - Vermont Teddy Bear Company; N Ferrisburgh, VT

Julia Austin - Huntington, VT

Jason Mintz - South Burlington, VT

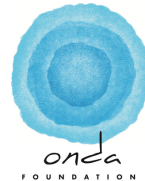
Adam Rubin - 2Revolutions; Burlington, VT

Carolyn Lawrence - Stowe Trails Partnership; Burlington, VT

Chris Quinn - Red House Building; Burlington, VT



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS



CONSERVATION

As part of the larger effort to conserve up to 214,000 acres throughout the state of Vermont, we anticipate dedicating increased staff time in 2024 towards conservation. We look forward to advancing two ongoing projects including pending activation of land that was conserved in 2023 on the Rolston Rest parcel in Southern Vermont. Additionally, we are currently working with the United States Forest Service, Town of Dorset, and Trust for Public Land to conserve lands that will help protect a critical wildlife corridor and recreation access. Our conservation efforts here overlap with an area that has been identified as one of eight critical wildlife corridors in the northern Appalachian-Acadian Region.



2023

Annual Report

