

# BONNYVALE

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*Growing Passion for Place, Wildlife, and Wild Lands*

# 30

2021 marked BEEC's 30th year—thirty years of nurturing a next generation of stewards and supporting and inspiring a love for nature. Our school programs have expanded to all Windham Southeast Supervisory Union elementary schools as well as Hinsdale Elementary, Marlboro Elementary, Hill-top Montessori, and Newbrook Elementary School.

Our Nature Explorers Camps have become the place for young naturalists to experience nature immersion during the summer and during school vacation weeks.

Together we have studied ferns and grasses, documented reptiles and amphibians, and have pondered the heavens and the fecund life in vernal pools. Our Salamander Crossing Brigades Project has inspired similar projects throughout the region.

Nothing makes us happier than to run into a BEEC program alumni and learned how their experience shaped their life, and thus the world around them.

Thanks to all who have made this possible.

*"Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries."*

—Jimmy Carter

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**2021** was BEEC's 30th anniversary year - thank you for helping us to reach this important milestone. We'd hoped to celebrate with you in many ways but had to scale back some of our plans due to COVID.

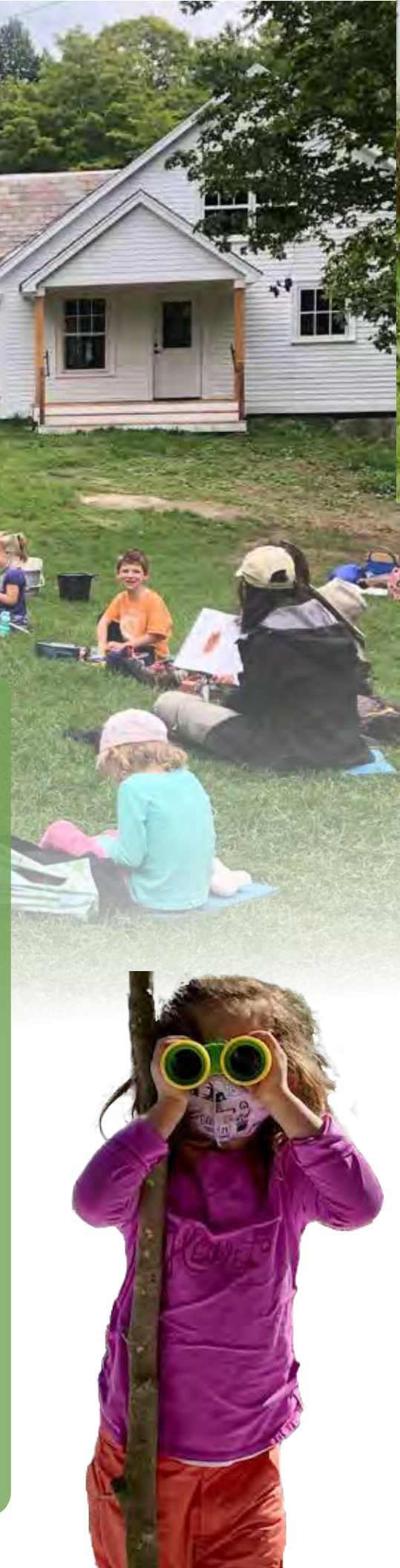
Despite the pandemic, BEEC educators returned to in-person school programs, hosted the biggest summer camp ever, and celebrated autumn with an incredibly successful Forest of Mystery weekend. Throughout the year, BEEC also offered many public programs in a variety of forms: traditional, custom, and remote. We hope you enjoyed many of these fun and educational events, as well as our grounds and trail system, which is always open to the public.

If you have visited BEEC recently, you surely noticed that we have made lots of progress on the renovation of the Stockwell Farmhouse, thanks to local businesses, Deconstruction Works, Mathes Hulme Builders, Helm Construction, and Chris Adams, Architect. We're so excited to continue these efforts in the coming year, with your support.

Be well and stay safe,



Linda Huebner, Director





First Rehab Network gathering at BEEC

## WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

BEEC received funding from the DJ&T Foundation to develop and strengthen a network of wildlife rehabilitators in southeastern Vermont. This initiative is now well underway, with an excellent group of recruits in training and resources available to improve facilities. The DJ&T grant also allowed us to create a section on our website, Living with Wildlife, that offers humane solutions for a variety of conflicts.

With our wildlife support vet, Dr. Svec, retiring from his practice, we no longer had access to a clinic for veterinary procedures. Fortunately, the Windham County Humane Society offered us the use of their clinic. Retired veterinarian Sue Kelly has joined Dr. Svec in providing veterinary services to injured wildlife. What a team!

We provided care for 91 orphaned and injured animals in 2021. Sixty-five were returned to the wild. We also fielded many wildlife related calls and helped get animals to other people who could help them.



An orphaned beaver busy building a lodge.

## SALAMANDER CROSSING BRIGADES

Each spring, BEEC organizes volunteers to assist amphibians that migrate across roads to reach their breeding habitat. In 2021 we held two on-line training sessions and kept 268 volunteers apprised of migration conditions throughout the season. For the first time, a four-toed salamander was documented at one of the crossing sites. Over 2,500 amphibians were safely escorted across roads.

### Four-toed Salamander

**Crossing note:** This rare salamander migrate to wetlands in the spring. Please photograph any suspected four-toeds!

**Field Markings:**

- Black flecks on a red-brown back
- Grayish-brown upper sides
- Bright white belly with black scattered spots
- Up to 4 inches long

Spotted Salamander (S)

Eastern Newt (N)

Four-toed (F)

Andrew Hillman



## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

While the pandemic prevented indoor gatherings, outdoor programming continued and online gatherings allowed us to expand our reach. One hybrid event featured a webinar by the Bird Diva, Bridget Butler, on crows and ravens. We then collaborated with Southeastern Vermont Audubon on a Crow Roost Quest to find the location of the Brattleboro crow roost and determine where the crows were coming from. Our results showed 600 crows streaming in from the north and roosting between the Connecticut River and the buildings on Main Street.

Highlights of monthly naturalist outings included a trip to see the showy lady's slippers at Eshqua Bog and a paddle at remote and wild Branch Pond.



## OUTREACH

There is so much that goes on at BEEC that does not fall into one of the program categories. Here are some examples:

- Naturalist Patti Smith shared her wildlife world with readers of the Brattleboro Reformer through her monthly column, the View from Heifer Hill.
- BEEC staff shared nature activities with parents and kids in each issue of Parent Express.
- We worked with many who called with questions about the natural world or wildlife concerns.



## OTHER PROJECTS

In 2021, BEEC worked with the Green River Watershed Alliance to present beaver education programs. These programs emphasized the importance of wetlands and demonstrated ways to resolve beaver conflicts without removing the beavers.

BEEC continued work on a town-wide ecological inventory for the Guilford Conservation Commission. This report, which will be completed in 2022, highlights the most ecologically significant parts of the town to prioritize for conservation.





*"The excitement about nature that the BEEC teacher portrays engages kids and creates a fun learning experience. They remember their hands-on experiences and build on this knowledge." — Teacher*

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The pandemic has had a silver-lining — the increase in outdoor learning at schools. BEEC educators have provided invaluable support to area teachers as they continued adapting to this necessity in 2021. Our educators provided outdoor learning opportunities for students at Oak Grove School, Green Street School, Academy School, Guilford Central School, Putney Central School, Dummerston School, Vernon Elementary School, Putney Grammar School, and the Hinsdale Elementary School.

BEEC developed curriculum with experiential activities for Hinsdale Elementary School K- 5th grades, meeting Next Generation Science Standards while getting students outdoors.

At the end of the spring semester, school program educators Joan Carey and Emily Hartz moved on to a new adventure—supporting teachers with outdoor learning at Academy School. We thank them both for their exceptional work for BEEC.

In the fall, Sarah Tsalbins and Ellen Peters, both seasoned educators, stepped into the school program positions and continued getting kids excited about science and nature.



## NATURE EXPLORERS CAMPS

After a year of COVID shut-down, we began with a scaled-back spring camp in 2021. That went so well that we dove into summer with the largest camp session ever— 8 weeks and all ran at full capacity. To allow for social distancing we staffed two smaller groups and were able to increase the numbers of campers.

Camps were completely outdoors, exploring, discovering, imagining, and playing through sunny days, soggy days, and everything in between.

A Vermont Afterschool Summer Matters for All grant enabled us to hire a special educator as a camp inclusion liaison to better support all children at camp.

Shutterbugs: Nature Photo Explorers, a week-long program for teenagers offered in collaboration with In-Sight Photography continues to be a great success.



*"We observed our child coming home every afternoon excited to show/tell us something he made and did. We love the connection he made with others, nature, and his creativity. We had such a warm welcome the first day, which eased our child's worries."*

*"My child attended several camps this summer but this was by far his favorite because he said there was always something to do. I think this is because of the quality of the staff who always tended to my child's needs and made sure that he was engaged."*

## FOREST OF MYSTERY

Over 600 people attended the Forest of Mystery, BEEC's theatrical Halloween-season show. *This Mad Future*, written and directed by James Gelter, took travelers to a dystopian world and offered the chance to change its fate. BEEC thanks to the many volunteers who brought this production to life.



# FINANCIALS 2021

## INCOME

Donations - \$62,013  
Fundraising (events) - \$13,170  
Grants - \$19,149  
Investment interest/dividends - \$20,502  
Membership - \$13,109  
Program Fees - \$112,598  
Merchandise - \$12  
Forgiveness of PPP Loans - \$72,859

## EXPENSES

Wages & benefits - \$217,043  
Rental expense - \$6,000  
General Expenses - \$18,028  
Repairs, Grounds Maintenance - \$6,751  
Stipends, Professional Fees, Contractors - \$12,231  
Insurance - \$9,552  
Taxes - \$5,672

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Belle Coles: President  
Kathleen White: Vice President  
Morgan Ingalls: Treasurer  
Mike Auerbach: Secretary  
Mary Grove  
Tom Hinckley  
John Orgorzalek

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Drew Adam  
Joe Cook  
David Deen  
Maggie Foley  
Alex Wilson

## STAFF

Linda Huebner: Director  
Joan Carey: Educator/ School Programs & Professional Development  
Emily Hartz: Educator/ School & Camp Programs  
Ellen Peters: Educator/School Programs  
Patti Smith: Naturalist,/ Public Programs & Wildlife Rehabilitation  
Sarah Tsalbins: Educator,/School Programs

## WHO WE WORKED WITH

Dummerston Conservation Commission  
Guilford Conservation Commission  
Green River Watershed Alliance  
InSight Photography  
Marlboro College  
Landmark College  
Academy School  
Green St School  
Oak Grove School  
Vernon Elementary School

Putney Central School  
Dummerston Elementary School  
Guilford Central School  
Newbrook School  
Townshend Elementary School  
Hilltop Montessori School  
Marlboro Elementary School  
Hinsdale Elementary School  
SPARKS program  
Guilford Stage and Stream Summer Program  
Community House  
Winston Prouty



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Help to support BEEC's mission to foster experiences that inspire connection to the natural world and its many inhabitants. Visit our website or mail a donation to:

BEEC, PO Box 2318, West Brattleboro, VT 05303

Your donation will allow BEEC to continue and to expand our efforts in 2022.

All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by federal law.

Camp counselor Libby Green's AmeriCorps service story:

*"I went to the Saturday Farmers Market and heard one of the 6-year-old campers call my name. She was so thrilled to see me outside of camp! I sat and talked with her and her mom, who shared that though it had been nearly a month since she had gone to camp for a week, her curiosity and love for nature were still blossoming. The camper shared that she now wants to be a naturalist when she grows up and that she made her family start composting! Each week flies by with whole new groups of children, but it was so wonderful to have that follow-up and see that each week, lifelong impacts are made and relationships with nature deepen."*

