

# BONNYVALE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



## ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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

### Time Flies When You're Having Fun

2019 WENT by in a blur of events, programs, and progress on our goal to improve our buildings and grounds to enhance our program capacity. We moved our administrative offices to the Winston Prouty campus at the beginning of the year so that our staff would be able to work more efficiently and comfortably. After we settled in there and explored the grounds, we moved cold-season youth programs from BEEC to Winston Prouty, too. When we've made some more improvements to our old farm buildings, we'll move back to BEEC year-round, but will continue this arrangement for the time being.

Read on to learn more about what you enabled all of us to accomplish in 2019....



## Director's Report

Thank you to everyone who made me feel welcome and helped me to get my feet under me during my first year at BEEC. It's been wonderful to work with so many kindred spirits, all of whom are helping to advance BEEC's mission to foster experiences that inspire connection to the natural world and its many inhabitants. I am grateful to our staff, Board, volunteers, donors, collaborators, and everyone who participates in BEEC programs and spends time in our fields and forests.

It's been nice to meet so many of BEEC's supporters this past year, and I'm looking forward to continuing to get to know you better. It truly takes a village, and I'm so grateful to all of you who make this collaboration possible. I believe that, collectively, we embody the sentiment "think globally, act locally," and I am looking forward to what we can accomplish together in the years to come.

*Linda Huebner*

Linda Huebner, Director

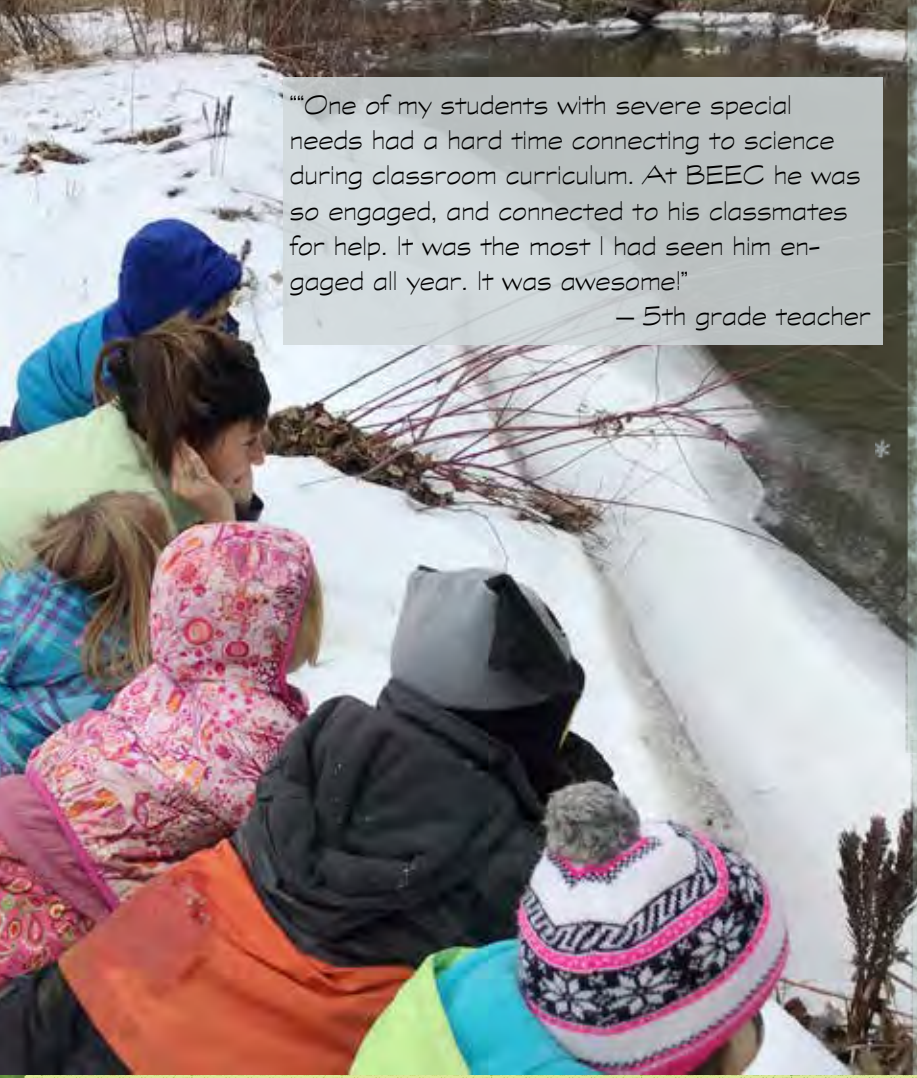


Jesse "Salmonboy" Drooker lived for just 19 days, but his short life has had a long impact. Jesse never got to go to camp or Nature Days, he never went for a walk in the woods, but BEEC's new "Salmonboy Shelter" serves as an outdoor classroom space, a rest-stop for hikers on BEEC's trails, and a Forest of Mystery scene location.

We hope that people of all ages enjoy this special place, made possible by a generous challenge donation from Jesse's dad, matching gifts from the BEEC Board, and the efforts of two exceptional volunteer carpenters.

Speaking of special people, 2019 was the 10th anniversary of the passing of Deb Smith, a beloved BEEC educator. Since she died, donations made in her memory have funded programs at Putney Central School. We honored Deb with a walk on her trail at BEEC.





“One of my students with severe special needs had a hard time connecting to science during classroom curriculum. At BEEC he was so engaged, and connected to his classmates for help. It was the most I had seen him engaged all year. It was awesome!”

— 5th grade teacher

## School Programs

What a busy year! BEEC’s classroom educators brought the natural world to 248 classes and took 70 school groups into the woods on Heifer Hill. We delivered programs in all Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Elementary Schools as well as Hinsdale Elementary School, Marlboro Elementary School, Hilltop Montessori School, and Newbrook Elementary School.

Thanks to a generous grant from The A.D. Henderson Foundation, Inc., BEEC implemented a successful pilot, “ABCs of a Forest Classroom,” at Guilford Central School. This program enabled early learners and their teachers to experience nearby outdoor spaces as Forest Classrooms — places that foster social learning and facilitate natural history education in context. The Guilford Pre-K and kindergarten teachers received comprehensive support from BEEC’s Joan Carey throughout the program. They then co-taught a special summer professional development program, with Joan, for other early educators in the region.



“Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.”

—Thomas Berry

## Public Programs

BEEC's public programs provide opportunities to connect with and learn about the natural wonders of our rich region. Programs such as an iNaturalist training and a wildlife rehabilitation workshop gave participants the tools they need to make a difference in their communities.

In 2019, BEEC launched a naturalist club, outings for those who are keen to learn from each other and deepen their knowledge. The group visited the Montague Sandplains, the Vernon Black Gum Swamp, the Caterpillar Lab, and other special places.

We also worked with the Green River Watershed Alliance to build sense of place in the Green River towns of Marlboro, Halifax, and Guilford.



## Other 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 also contributed an article to each issue of Parent Express, sharing nature activities with parents and kids.
- We worked with many individuals who called with questions about the natural world, wildlife concerns, or with reports of injured or orphaned wildlife.



## Forest of Mystery

Over 600 people attended the 25th Forest of Mystery. The Witch's Turn, written and directed by James and Jess Gelter honored the women of BEEC. An enormous and enthusiastic group of volunteer actors brought to this production to our fields and forest for three nights in October.



## Nature Explorers Camps

BEEC's lovely Heifer Hill property was once again the perfect outdoor classroom for our Nature Explorers Winter, Spring, and Summer Camps. Discovery, investigation, play, adventure, and fun are at the heart of these camps, which served 156 children ages 4-12. Scholarship funds from your generous donations allowed BEEC to provide scholarship assistance to 17 children, giving these children an opportunity to learn and play in nature.

In 2019 we continued offering Nature Days on teacher-in-service days and certain holidays. These programs provide working parents a nature-enriched learning opportunity for their children.

We moved cold weather day camps to the Winston Prouty campus—our temporary office space where the pipes don't freeze in winter.

"My child had so much fun today they asked to come back as soon as possible! Thank you for your incredibly wonderful camps."

— Camper parent



"My son, who was always very fearful of bees before his time at BEEC, stopped and quietly watched a bee move from flower to flower. He observed the pollen collected on it's legs and wondered aloud about where it may be headed."

— Camper parent

## Conservation Planning

Habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change, and invasive exotics all threaten the nature we love. One of the most important acts we can take locally is to build a network of conserved or stewarded lands that will increase the resilience of natural systems. Toward this end, BEEC has been conducting a biodiversity inventory for the Green River Watershed Alliance. Fieldwork was finished in 2019. The results will be posted soon at [www.greenriverwa.org](http://www.greenriverwa.org) and have already informed conservation in the area.

BEEC is also a partner in the Windham Connectivity Project. We lend our expertise to this grassroots effort to maintain the critical wildlife habitat linkage extending from the Massachusetts border to the Green Mountain National Forest.

In 2019 we also worked with the Guilford Conservation Commission on an ongoing inventory of the town's natural heritage.

### The Land of the Green River: A Natural Heritage Inventory



We miss the sage counsel of long-time Advisory Council member Bob Engel, who died in 2018. His guided walks were full of revelations and fun. Bob was a supporter and friend to BEEC during his lifetime, and his planned gift, received in 2019, is now helping BEEC continue our efforts in his memory.

If you'd like to memorialize or honor someone special, or include BEEC in your advanced planning, there are many opportunities to support the work that we do, both in the present and the future.

Please contact Linda at [linda@beec.org](mailto:linda@beec.org) or 257-5785 if you'd like to discuss ideas.



## Wildlife Rehabilitation

Not only does wildlife rehabilitation help individual animals, it is also among the tools for tracking wildlife populations and wildlife health. In 2019 there was a sharp drop in the number of squirrels needing care, which reflected the population drop over the winter—the result of a failure of wild fruit and nut crops in the fall of 2018. The 2018 spike in sick porcupines tapered off in 2019. An autopsy added credence to our theory that raccoon roundworm was the culprit. This parasite is lethal in porcupines. It may be that porcupine and raccoon populations are linked.

Among the creatures we were able to help in 2019 were: Max, the orphaned mink; Mo, the independent porcupette; and an injured mother opossum who then adopted two more orphaned joeys.



“If it should turn out that we have mishandled our own lives as several civilizations before us have done, it seems a pity that we should involve the violet and the tree frog in our departure.”  
—Loren Eiseley



## Salamander Crossing Brigades

2019 was a great year for amphibians that needed to cross roads to reach their breeding pools—most of the rain came after midnight so there was very little traffic. Iffy forecasts kept crossing guards on their toes and generated many requests to check sites just in case. Thank you to all who went out. Those who sent in reports helped over 1,000 amphibians safely across roads during peak evening traffic hours.



*Staff*

Linda Huebner – Director  
Joan Carey – School Programs & Professional Development  
Emily Hartz – Environmental Educator  
Patti Smith – Public Programs, Wildlife Rehabilitation, Conservation Initiatives  
Kristina Weeks – Camp & Youth Programs, Environmental Educator

*Board of Directors*

Belle Coles - President  
Kathleen White - Vice President  
Morgan Ingalls - Treasurer  
Mike Auerbach - Secretary  
Tracey Devlin-Grubinger  
Tom Hinckley  
Jennifer Course

*Advisory Committee*

Drew Adam  
Joe Cook  
David Deen  
Maggie Foley  
John Gorzalek  
Bob Reuter  
Alex Wilson

*Financials 2019*

*Income*

Donations - \$47,723.38  
Fundraising - \$13,403.49  
Grants - \$43,397.44  
Rental income - \$900.00  
Interest/Dividends - \$19,258.42  
Membership - \$6,127.80  
Program Fees - \$112,170.59  
Merchandise - \$20.00

*Expenses*

Wages - \$195,662.49  
Rental expense - \$5,526.95  
General Expenses - \$26,093.22  
Repairs - \$13,468.26  
Stipends, Professional Fees, Contractors - \$31,083.10  
Insurance - \$7,949.64  
Taxes - \$6,539.76



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 2020.

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