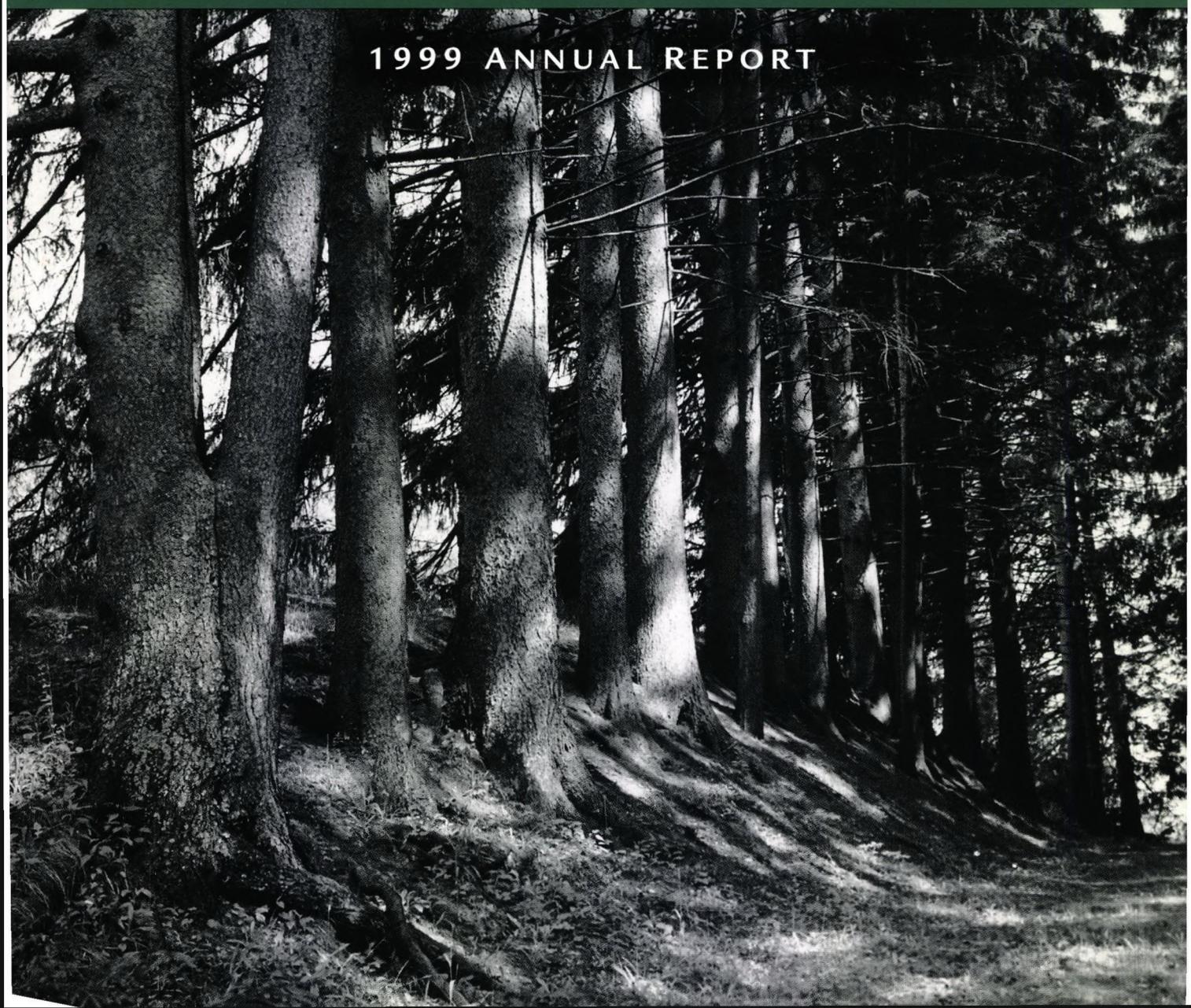




A National Park and a Vision of Conservation Stewardship

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

1999 ANNUAL REPORT





**“...every middle-aged man who
revisits his birthplace after
a few years of absence, looks
upon another landscape.”**

— George Perkins Marsh

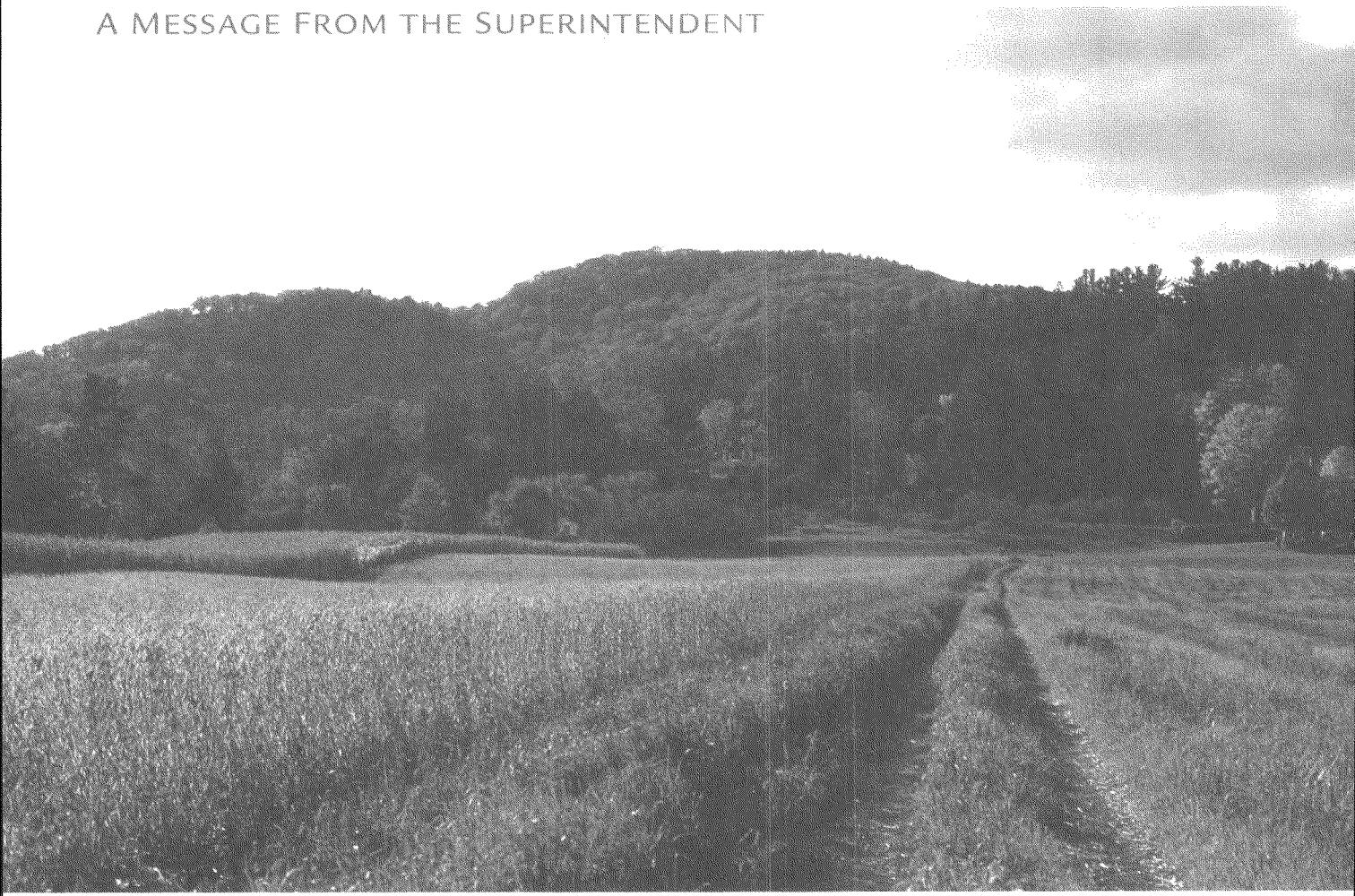
BACKGROUND

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, in Woodstock, Vermont, is the only national park to tell the story of conservation history and the evolving nature of land stewardship in America. Woodstock born George Perkins Marsh, in 1864, wrote the book *Man and Nature*, one of the seminal texts of environmental thinking. Generations ahead of his time, Marsh described the global nature of environmental degradation and championed a new ethic of responsible stewardship and civic democracy. Strongly influenced by *Man and Nature*, Frederick Billings began reforesting the denuded and eroding slopes of Woodstock's Mt. Tom in 1874, creating one of the earliest planned and scientifically managed forests in the United States. The 550-acre woodland illustrates much of the history of forest conservation in America and is managed to also reflect best practices in contemporary sustainability and stewardship.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park was established in 1992, when Frederick Billings' granddaughter, Mary French Rockefeller, and her husband, conservationist Laurance S. Rockefeller conveyed their estate's residential and forest lands to the people of the United States. The Rockefellers established the Billings Farm & Museum in 1983 to preserve and interpret the historic farm of the Marsh, Billings and Rockefeller families. Working in partnership, the Farm & Museum and the Park chronicle three generations of stewardship on this land and the emergence of a national conservation ethic. The Park also serves as the headquarters for the National Park Service's Conservation Study Institute, an organization that works nationally and internationally to promote education and training, conduct research, and build networks for the conservation community.

LEFT: Marsh, the first U.S. Ambassador to Italy, in his Florence library.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Mount Tom from the Billings Farm & Museum.

As together we build America's first park about conservation, we celebrate the places that are closest to our hearts: our woodlands, riverbanks, open spaces, working landscapes and community centers, and celebrate the people who work so assiduously to care for these places. Newton B. Drury, a former Director of the National Park Service, has written:

There are certain values in our landscape that ought to be sustained against destruction or impairment, though their worth cannot be expressed in money terms. They are essential to our "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness;" this nation of ours is not so rich it can afford to lose them; it is still rich enough to afford to preserve them.

Our new national park has come into being at a particularly auspicious historical moment when we must make every effort to ensure that the places and values associated with our "*life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness*" are not diminished or forever lost. In many tangible and intangible ways our rich natural and cultural heritage, our sense of place, recreation and general well-being, are the ingredients essential to the quality and sustainability of life. A stewardship ethic and a commitment to the commonwealth, based on tolerance and respect for democratic institutions are vital to any meaningful exercise of liberty. Responsible stewardship of our environment may be our only guarantee that in the pursuit of our happiness we do not burn out like a shooting star—but pass

on to each successive generation the special places and experiences that have shaped our character and nurtured our souls.

Year 2000 marks the culmination of a remarkable year of growth for the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park and the Billings Farm & Museum. It began with an ambitious project to renovate the 11,000 square foot Carriage Barn for stewardship programs, park offices and a new exhibit *Celebrating Stewardship: People Taking Care of Places*. It culminated with successful completion of the building and the exhibit that received a *1999 Vermont Preservation Award* from the Preservation Trust of Vermont.

Across the road, the Billings Farm & Museum completed the renovation of their Visitor Center that is shared with the Park, a new exhibit, and a beautiful 100-seat auditorium. This renovation was followed by the rebuilding of the farm's wooden silos—perhaps the last of an era.

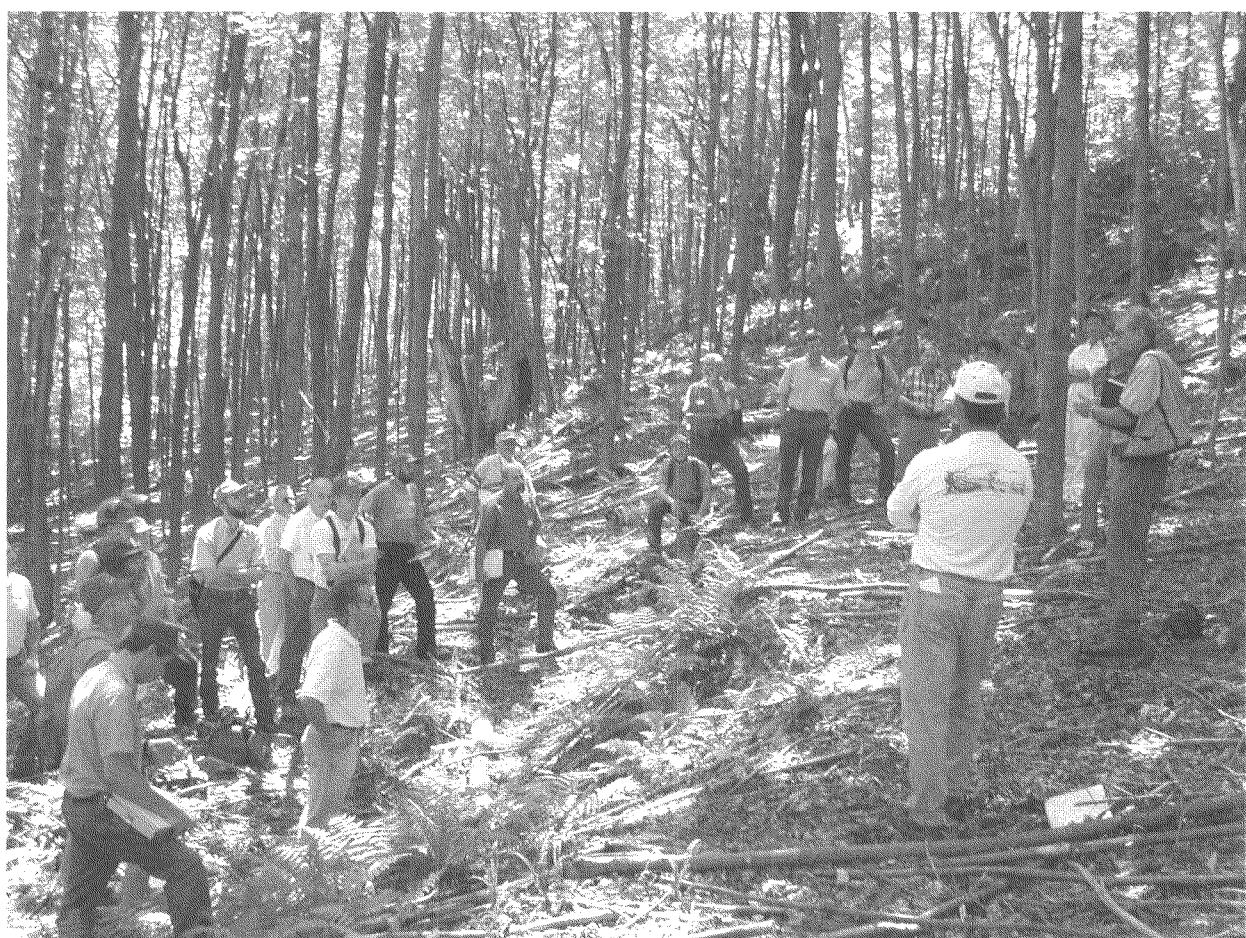
As we look to the future we are wonderfully positioned to join with our many partners in presenting educational programs, demonstration projects, and stories that recognize the importance and role of places and encourage a culture of conservation and stewardship. We need to challenge ourselves in every way to ensure that in the focus and breadth of our programs we are taking the fullest advantage of our facilities, talented staff, diverse and knowledgeable partners, and most of all, this extraordinary place.

—Rolf Diamant

A VISION FOR THE PARK

"... there is a mandate to invent an entirely new kind of park. It must be one where the human stories and the natural history are intertwined; where the relatively small acreage serves as an educational resource for the entire National Park Service and a seedbed for American environmental thought; and where the legacy of American conservation and its future enter into dialogue, generating a new environmental paradigm for our day."

— John Elder, Opening Day, June 5, 1998



Carrying the Vision Forward in 1999

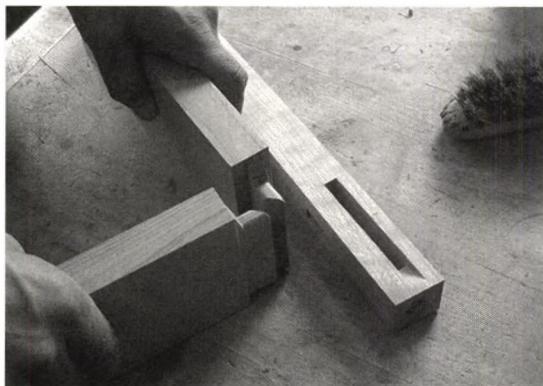
The Park is focusing on the development of three core program areas; 1) Sustainable Land Stewardship; 2) Stewardship Education; and 3) Building Conservation Leadership Skills.

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO LAND STEWARDSHIP

The woodland that Billings created is one of the earliest planned and scientifically managed forests in the United States. The Billings and Rockefeller families continued the tradition of sustainable forest stewardship throughout the 20th century. Today, the 550-acre woodland is managed as a working forest demonstrating the best practices for long-term sustainability. The forest is a living exhibit and cultural landscape illustrating more than a century of forest stewardship in America.

Much of the wood harvesting and milling are done as part of an ongoing series of public programs entitled *Working Woodlands*, sponsored in collaboration with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service's State & Private Forestry Program, Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recre-





Hardwoods from the Park's forest were used to build the furniture in the exhibit reading area.

ation, and the Billings Farm & Museum. Eastern White Pine was harvested and milled on site and used for nearly all the finished carpentry in the new Carriage Barn Visitor Center. In recognition of George Perkins Marsh's involvement with the School of Forestry at Vallombrosa, Italy and Vallombrosa's centuries old association between furniture making and forest conservation, three Vermont woodcrafters, Bruce Beeken and Jeff Parsons (Beeken/Parsons, Shelburne), Dan Ober (Birdseye Woodshop, Richmond) and Garret Hack (Thetford) designed and built benches, chairs, tables and bookcases for the new Visitor Center using wood from the Mt. Tom Forest. The project illustrates for visitors how economic value can be added to products through an association with a special place, regional craftsmanship, and land stewardship, strengthening conservation and sustainable communities.

On a demonstration basis in 1999, a horse patrol of the Mt. Tom forest was begun on weekends. This was particularly successful at engaging hikers and walkers, providing orientation and directions as well as information about park and forest stewardship activities.

In 1999, the Conservation Study Institute and the University of Vermont completed the first phase of a Forest Cultural Landscape Report, including a history of the forest and management practices. The report addresses the historical significance of key forest features. With this knowledge, and with a thorough forest inventory programmed in FY 2000, a comprehensive, long-range forest plan will be prepared.



A draft report on the park's art collection was also completed this year. The report looks at the role of Hudson River School artists in shaping 19th century public views on the environment and conservation.

"We must conceive of stewardship not simply as one individual's practice, but rather as the mutual and intimate relationship, extending across the generations, between a human community and its place on Earth."

—John Elder, "Inheriting Mt. Tom," Orion 1997

ABOVE: The new exhibit *Conservation Stewardship: People Taking Care of Places* traces the development of conservation thought and celebrates stories of stewardship from across the country and around the world.

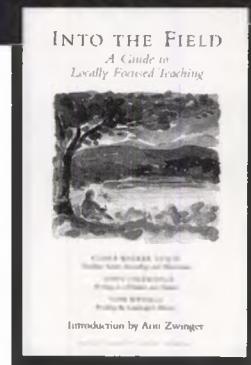


STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

Success can be measured in the many tens of thousands of people who visited the park this year and who reflect upon its message of stewardship, and in the special public programs sponsored by the Park, the Conservation Study Institute, and partners. There were 70,000 visitor contacts in 1999 and more than 19,000 people participated in guided tours. The tours explain the remarkable contributions of George Perkins Marsh to a global concept of husbandry and sustainability while moving through a once devastated landscape completed transformed and renewed by the Billings and Rockefeller families through generations of careful conservation and stewardship. The tours interpret the story of this transformation as well as the contributions of Frederick Billings and Laurance S. Rockefeller to American conservation.

The new exhibit *Conservation Stewardship: People Taking Care of Places*, opened in August, traces the historic development of conservation thought and celebrates stories of stewardship from across the country and around the world. The exhibit also encourages visitors to reflect on their own communities and special places and offers them an opportunity to share their own stories of conservation by means of an interactive computerized journal.

Conservation Stewardship: People Taking Care of Places is complemented by the exhibit *Upon This Land* which recently opened in the Visitor Center located at the Billings Farm & Museum and the academy award nominated film *A Place in the Land* now showing in a newly built 100 seat theater.



Into the Field, a book published by the Orion Society, an award winning environmental education organization.

The Park, the Conservation Study Institute, Shelburne Farms, and The Orion Society are currently planning collaborative initiatives to promote place-based conservation education with national parks and their education partners. The Orion Society's *Stories in the Land* Program takes an interdisciplinary, field-based approach to environmental education that has the potential to lend greater depth to the educational initiatives in national parks. Shelburne Farms is actively involved in conservation education through year-round on-site programs for nearby school children, developing teaching resources, and working to integrate stewardship into Vermont's educational curriculum. The National Park Service and its many partners offer an extensive range of education programs in parks across the country. There is tremendous potential for furthering these educational opportunities as national parks offer excellent settings for institutes, courses, teacher-training workshops, and curricular planning sessions.

The Orion Society and the National Park Service have acknowledged their mutual aim "to develop a



culture of conservation and stewardship through educational programs that promote a sense of place in parks, and their larger communities.” The Orion Society, with its various publications, networks of teachers and writers, and field programs, is uniquely positioned to work with the National Park Service in developing national initiatives and demonstration

projects to promote and expand place-based approaches to education. These projects will serve as a foundation for an extensive collaboration within, as well as beyond, the park system.

The Park and the Conservation Study Institute have also joined Shelburne Farms, the Green Mountain National Forest and the National Wildlife Federation to cultivate a stewardship ethic and understanding of forest concepts and management among teachers (and consequently students) in communities adjacent to Vermont’s public lands. This initiative would develop a core group of teacher leaders who will serve as mentors to their peers on forest stewardship, including ecosystem management and watershed education.



FIGURE 187: Representatives from the National Park Service, The Orion Society, Shelburne Farms, Antioch New England and the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center gathered at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in November 1999 to advance place based educational programming. Participants from The Orion Society included master teachers, advisors, and writers. Participants from the National Park Service included staff from the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the Conservation Study Institute, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, and the Boston System Support Office.



CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is a principal partner of the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute. The Park works with the Institute on a variety of projects to enhance conservation leadership skills.

The Conservation Study Institute's mission is to create opportunities for dialogue, inquiry and lifelong learning to enhance the stewardship of landscapes and communities. The Conservation Study Institute was established by the National Park Service to enhance leadership in the field of conservation. In collaboration with the NPS, and academic and nonprofit partners, the Institute provides a forum for the conservation community and the public to discuss conservation history, contemporary issues and practice, and future directions for the field.

A first step for the Conservation Study Institute in 1999 was to lay the foundations for long-term partnerships. Collaboration brings varied perspectives on conservation from academic, government and private organizations, to shape relevant programs and cultivate a commitment to accomplishing programs with a diverse array of partners. The Institute's founding partners include the University of Vermont, Shelburne Farms, and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment.

Another key step was to initiate an outreach effort to publicize the Institute and its programs. During the first year, hundreds of people were contacted through presentations at conferences, mailings, public programs, training programs on



conservation history and current practice, and focused professional working sessions. A series of workshops on leadership was particularly successful. These workshops explored new styles of leadership for community-based collaborative work and emphasized the importance of reflection and articulation of personal and organizational stewardship ethics. The public programs and professional working sessions focused on the changing nature of conservation as reflected in heritage areas and large-scale regional landscapes, forest stewardship and sense of place. The professional working sessions, in particular, provided a forum to discuss current practice, assess recent trends, and explore emerging models of conservation.

The park, The Woodstock Foundation, Inc. and the Conservation Study Institute collaborated on a Feasibility Study for a *Stewardship Initiative*. This

Project International Working Session
convened by the Conservation
Study Institute and QFE Atlantic
Center for the Environment held
at the Park's Bungalow, a retreat
and conference site.

In front: The Pogue, Mount Tom



project was designed to reach out to people and organizations involved in new and thoughtful approaches to conservation. Forty-eight individuals and organizations, whose work brings conservation to new audiences or extends stewardship activities in new ways, were interviewed. Insights on current

conservation gained from this project are being used to strengthen the park's interpretive program, shape programs that will recognize and encourage stewardship of special places, and promote the ongoing exchange of knowledge and experience from a network of conservation practitioners.



Forty-eight individuals and organizations contributed to the Stewardship Initiative.

Vermont:

Atlas Timberlands Partnership
Food Works
Keeping Track
New England Grassroots Environment Fund
Preservation Trust of Vermont
Shelburne Farms
Vermont Family Forests
Vermont Land Trust
Vital Communities of the Upper Valley

Northeast:

Champlain Valley Heritage Network
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
EcoVillage at Ithaca
Monadnock Institute for Nature, Place and Culture
Northern Forest Center
The Orion Society
The Trust for Public Land—Good Life Center

Southeast:

Alliance for Sustainable Communities
Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation
The Conservation Fund—Scuppernong River Greenway
The Conservation Fund—Sustainable Everglades Initiative
The Nature Conservancy—Virginia Coast Reserve

Midwest:

Menominee Tribal Enterprises
Mississippi River Basin Alliance

Intermountain West:

AERO—Alternative Energy Resources Organization
Cornerstones Community Partnerships

Forest Trust

Native Seeds/SEARCH
Sierra Business Council
Sonoran Institute
The Murie Center
The Nature Conservancy—Yampa River Project
The Trust for Public Land—Nez Perce Project

Pacific West:

Golden Gate National Parks Association
Whatcom County Land Trust

International:

A-Projekt (Slovak Republic)
CAMPFIRE (Zimbabwe)
Ecotrust (United States and Canada)
Environmental Partnership for Central Europe (Czech Republic)
Exmoor National Park (England)
Foundation for Development of the Jizerske Hory Mts. (Czech Republic)
Fundación pro Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Colombia)
International Centre for Protected Landscapes (Wales)
Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment (US & Canada)
South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (Samoa)
The Island Nature Trust (Canada)

Foundations:

Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, (New York)
Henry P. Kendall Foundation (Boston)
New England Grassroots Environment Fund (Vermont)
Rockefeller Brothers Fund Inc. (New York)



THE PARK AT A GLANCE

- ◆ National Historic Landmark in Conservation History
- ◆ 555 acres in public ownership including one of the earliest professionally managed forests in the country
- ◆ Vermont's first tree farm—11 historic forest stands
- ◆ 300 acres of scenic easements
- ◆ Operating Partnership with the Billings Farm & Museum
- ◆ 70,000 annual visitors (combined MBRNHP/BF&M)
- ◆ Two Visitor Center operations
- ◆ Exhibit on conservation history and practice
- ◆ Home of NPS Conservation Study Institute and NPS VT/NH offices of Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
- ◆ 20 miles of roads & trails including six miles of historic carriage roads
- ◆ 19th-Century Mansion with 50 rooms, 3000 volume library, 541 paintings and prints including landscapes by Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, and J.F. Kensett
- ◆ 16 horse drawn carriages and sleighs
- ◆ 23,000 museum artifacts
- ◆ 5 acres of landscaped grounds and formal gardens



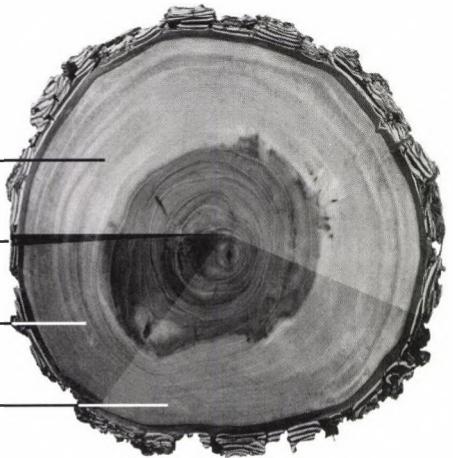
FUNDING BY SOURCE, FY 1999

Park Operating Base \$992,000

Fee Revenue & Income \$61,000

Park Fund (Endowment*) \$154,741

Grants & Projects \$515,600

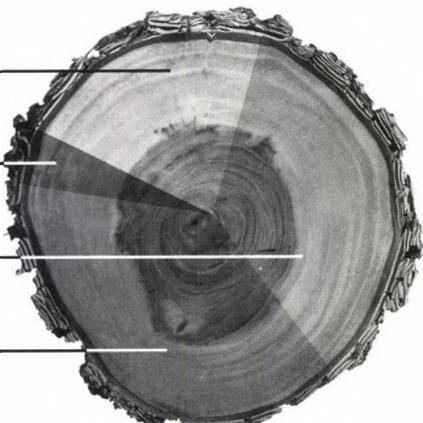
**PARK OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURES, FY 1999**

Resource Protection & Forest Stewardship 21%

Management & Administration 10%

Visitor Services & Programs 31%

Maintenance & Facility Operations 38%



* The Endowment is held and managed by The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.

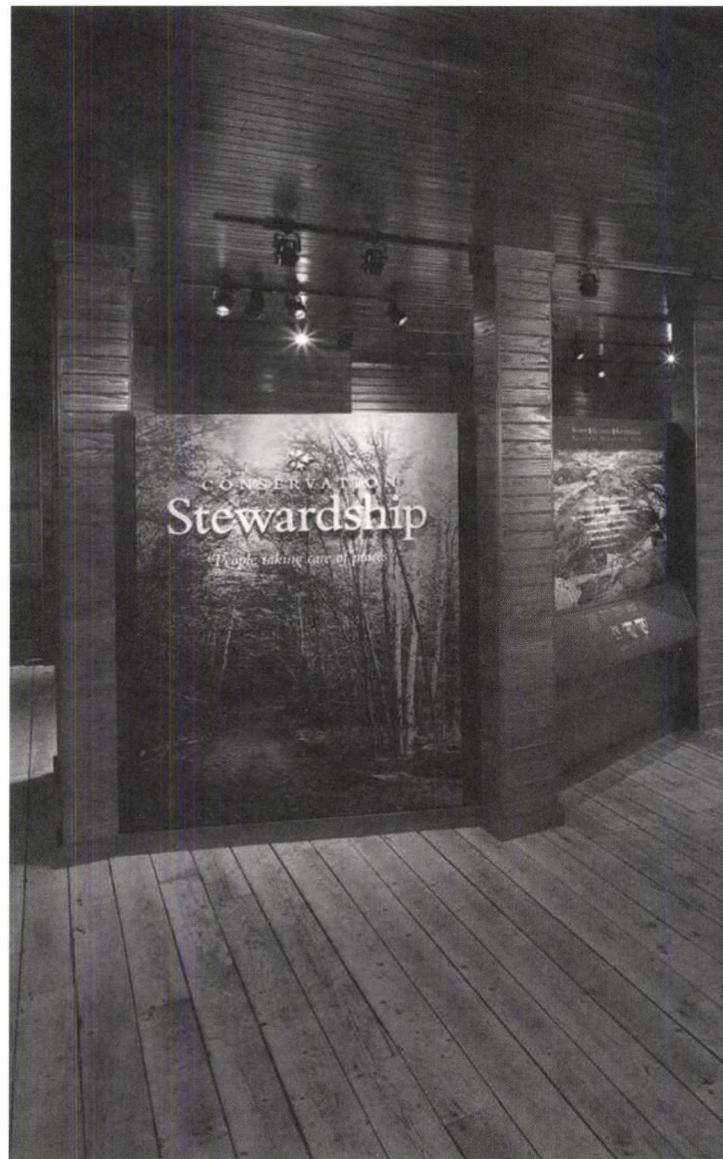
CARRIAGE BARN VISITOR CENTER & STEWARDSHIP EXHIBIT OPENING

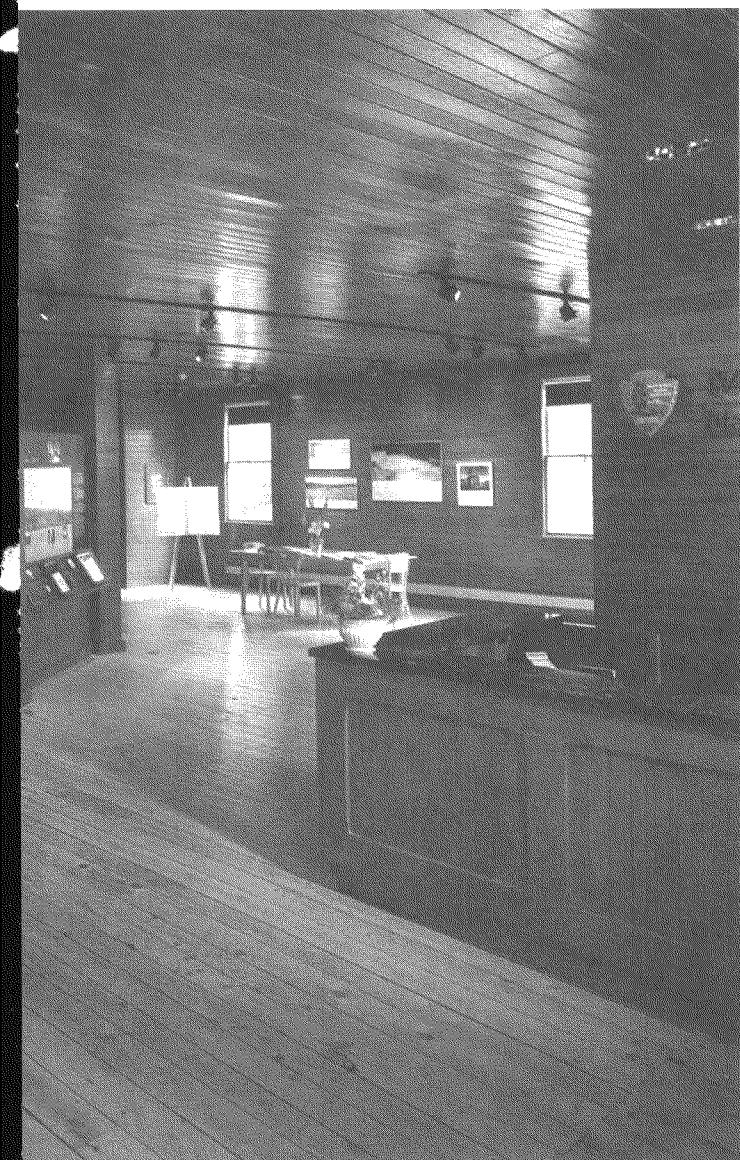
Cutting the ribbon at the Dedication Ceremony are (left to right) Superintendent Diamant, National Park Service Northeast Regional Director Marie Rust, Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy and Laurance S. Rockefeller

The Park held a dedication ceremony August 7, 1999 for the Carriage Barn Visitor Center & Stewardship Exhibit. The Carriage Barn includes a Visitor Center and exhibit, Park offices and a new home for the NPS Conservation Study Institute and the New Hampshire and Vermont offices of the NPS Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program.

The exhibit *Conservation Stewardship: People Taking Care of Places* explores the prescient contributions of George Perkins Marsh to a global concept of husbandry and sustainability and illustrates the recovery of this once devastated Vermont landscape through generations of careful conservation and stewardship by the Billings and Rockefeller families. The exhibit also traces the development of conservation thinking and practice displaying early editions of many of the seminal books of the environmental movement including Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature*, John Muir's *Our National Parks*, Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

The exhibit also celebrates contemporary personal stories of stewardship from around the country and around the world. The Leach family speaks about conserving their dairy farm in Vermont's Mettowee Valley; Elvera Vigil Ogard tells the story of how her small New Mexican community came together to restore their adobe church; writer Rick Bass reflects on the efforts of he and his neighbors to encourage sustainable community forestry in northwest Montana's Yaak Valley;





Che Madyun describes the conversion of vacant lots in Boston's Dudley Street community into new housing and community gardens; rancher Lynne Sherrod explains how a new partnership between ranchers and environmentalists is preserving Colorado's Elk River Valley; and Giles Romulus from the small island of Saint Lucia in the West Indies speaks of integrating the survival needs of local communities with broader conservation goals.

Because conservation work is constantly evolving, these narratives will be refreshed with ever-new voices of stewardship. To gather and present these stories, the National Park Service joined with The Orion Society and its quarterly *Orion Afield*, an award-winning magazine devoted to supporting grassroots environmental initiatives in conservation, restoration, and education across North America.

The exhibit also includes interactive computer stations with links to the web pages of conservation organizations across the country. Visitors will also use the computers to make "journal" entries about special places that are important to them. A running compendium of journal entries will be retrievable on each computer.

The exhibit was produced by the staff of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the Conservation Study Institute, the NPS' Harpers Ferry Center, the Quebec Labrador Foundation's Atlantic Center for the Environment, and The Orion Society.

MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NHP AND PARTNERS



PARK STAFF

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Mea Arego, Administrative Officer
Valeri Wolffe, Program Assistant
Tim Maguire, Chief of Visitor Services
Alton Straub, Park Ranger
Janet Houghton, Curator
Ella Rothgangel, Museum Technician
Kyle Jones, Park Resources Manager
John Gilbert, Facility Manager
Peter Glover, Wood Crafter
Kim Murray, Horticulturist*

BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM/ THE WOODSTOCK FOUNDATION, INC.

David Donath, President

CONSERVATION STUDY INSTITUTE

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The Watershed Center
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
USDA Forest Service
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, & Recreation*

We thank the following for the use of their photography in making this report.

*Cover: top, left and center: Jim Westphalen; top, right: Jon Gilbert Fox; bottom: Emily Sloan
Inside Front Cover: Emily Sloan; inset: Billings Family Archives
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Page 4: Kenneth Dudzik
Page 6, left: Kyle Jones; right: Barbara Slaiby
Page 7: Amy Thompson, Valley News
Page 8, top: Helen Scully; bottom: Rolf Diamant
Page 9: Rolf Diamant
Page 10: Greig Cranna, QLF
Page 12: Barbara Slaiby
Page 15, top, left: Jeff Nintzel; top, right: Emily Sloan; bottom: Jim Westphalen
Page 16: Jeff Nintzel
Inside Back Cover: Emily Sloan*

Design: Brian P. Graphic Arts, Montpelier, Vermont

Printing: Government Printing Office

The cover was printed on Mohawk 50/10, a 50% recycled paper with 15% post-consumer waste. The text was printed on Neenah Environment, a 100% recycled paper, with 30% post-consumer-waste.

Printed using soy-based inks.

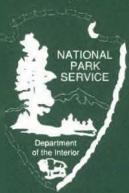
Typeset in ITC Legacy Serif and ITC Legacy Sans.

Published by the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, July 2000



**"The land ethic will begin
one individual at a time"**

*-Aldo Leopold,
A Sand County Almanac*



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