

# DIONONDEHOWA

## Wildlife Sanctuary & School

ISSUE 20

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2022

### DWS&S

#### *Incorporating Purposes*

#### **The Wildlife Sanctuary:**

- \* Provides a recharge area for wildlife on the Sanctuary and in the region
- \* Contributes to the corridor that provides migration routes for large animals

- \* Provides habitat for native plants and animals in an ever-dwindling natural landscape

- \* Provides riparian and landscape beauty for recreational users of the Battenkill

- \* Contributes land to existing forever-wild areas

#### **Dionondehowa School:**

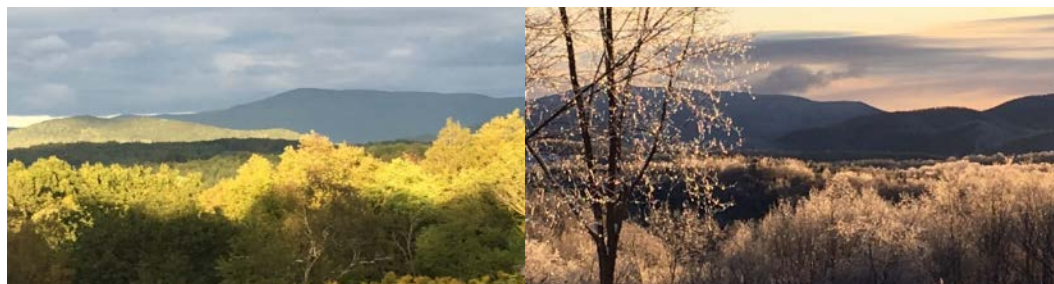
- \* Focuses on Nature Studies, the Healing Arts, and the Expressive Arts in a beautiful natural setting

- \* Encourages the free exchange of ideas

- \* Makes Expressive Arts, Healing Arts, and Nature programs available to individuals of diverse backgrounds and interests

- \* Engenders a sense of social and environmental responsibility

- \* Offers skills for implementing social and environmental responsibility



#### **Never Twice The Same**

*"There had been a lot of loss that summer so I was thinking a lot.. about loss. Loss, which is change. Dramatic, unbearable, unacceptable change. The impermanence of everything. How change is the only constant. I was living on a hill that gave me a broad view of the Battenkill Valley, the Taconic Mts. to the East... and every sunrise, if I would only lift my head. I watched the mountains that summer, with their infinite, subtle, undulating color and form. Sometimes they would move miles closer, eminent, animate. Other times, they would recede into the distance, a flat backdrop, like an enormous postcard... or a thin line, separating Sky and Earth. And sometimes... when the morning fog was thick in the valley, they were islands, with neither Sky nor Earth.*

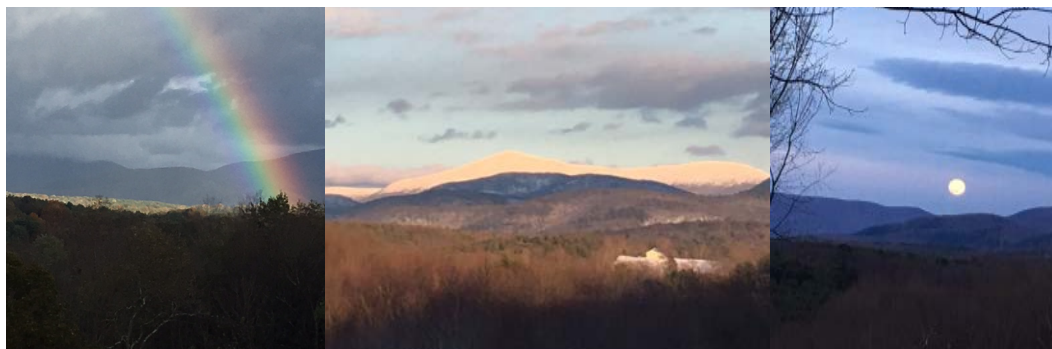
*They were never twice the same. If I turned my back for a moment, they had changed. Permanent. And ever-changing.*

*The mountains taught me something new that summer. And it may just be that believing is seeing... but the mountains showed me how permanence and change are one-in-the-same... and both... are illusions."*

This brief entry from my 1980 notebook was written upon my return from years living in San Francisco (where I had definitely left my heart). I was home again, camping in the small geodesic dome we'd built together atop a hill in southern Washington County.

I did not know, then, that in fifteen years Dionondehowa would be born as the nonprofit forever-wild land-trust it is today... farther East but with that same long-view closer now... as the raven flies... The illusory nature of Being may be, ironically, even more certain for me these days. And maybe moreso in 2022 as we are all enough-undone to completely and lovingly reinvent our understanding of what it is To Be.

*~Bonnie Hoag*



**We dedicate this Newsletter to Steven Donziger and to all those murdered in Columbia.**

### **DWS&S**

#### **Board of Directors**

Peter Andrea

Bonnie Hoag

Leilah Mariposa

Geoffrey Ovington

Kristi Plunkett

Nicholas Ruepp

Eric Strebel

Beth Ulion



### **Nicholas Ruepp**

#### **New Board Member**

Nick is a longtime supporter of Dionondehowa. Having participated from the periphery for many years, Nick joined the DWS&S Board as an interim member in 2021. He is most at home on the land, taking part in work days or maintenance. Many of you might recognize him as the friendly face of "Parking Enforcement" at the annual Taconic Music concerts! He is also the husband of Board Member Kristi Plunkett and the father of three beautiful daughters - Leilah, Acacia, and Anahla. Professionally, Nick is an Executive Producer at Velan Studios - a game development studio in Troy, NY.



### **Beth Ulion**

#### **New Board Member**

Imagine my awe at the universe when I moved from Chicago, IL to Salem, NY to find the magical, mystical Dionondehowa only 12 minutes away from my new home (by car, that is, perhaps an hour by coyote trot). I am delighted to join this community of human people devoted to the land and her wild beings. As a board member, I bring professional experience in grant writing, fundraising, and communications. As a regular old human, I bring interests in fiction writing, herb and vegetable gardening, and dismantling this horrifyingly destructive culture of human supremacy. Hope to meet you at our 2022 events!

✧ *Being alive is a mystical adventure* ✧

### ***For Your Generosity of Time, Energy and Spirit... Big Thanks from Us to You:***

**Charlene Leary** for painting The Muse Room door and for often giving counsel.

**Rey Wells** for your love of the winged ones and for guiding our 2022 Bird Walk.

**Mike Conklin** for the many ways you ingeniously problem-solve for us!

**David Hunt** as you persevere for our native plant communities.

**CJ Davidsen** and **Josh Whitney** for patrolling the Sanctuary during "deer season" 2021. The peace of mind you bring is beyond measure.

**Jacki & Ron at Mother Myrick's** for those Lemon Lulus. What a sweet way to support Taconic Music and Dionondehowa.

**Patti & Jim Evans** who again cleaned out the Bluebird boxes for another season.

**Union College Ozone House** - we jus' love you! Thanks, too, to **Seyffie Maleki**.

**Union College Environmental Club** - same-same!

*And to anyone we may have overlooked, make yourselves known. Please.*

We are so very grateful to everyone who appreciates & supports **This Wild Dream**.



In 2016 an old-growth monitoring plot, 900-meters square, was laid out in the forever-wild Sanctuary woods, to be assessed every five years for its progress toward typical old-growth measurements. Here is a brief excerpt from David Hunt's report.

"The old-growth state of a forest typically has abundant standing live and downed dead individuals of climax tree species at or near their maximum girth. Based on the maximum, tree girths for the 4 tree species over 15cm dbh (diameter-at-breast-height) in the forest canopy of the Sanctuary plot it was estimated to be 25% of the way toward an old-growth state in 2016 and 28% of the way in 2021.

With an increase of 3% progression over the past five years - about 0.6% per year - it is estimated that the forest plot would finally recover to the initial (incipient) stages of old-growth in about 120 years (2141). It is expected that the plot will be about 31% of the way in 2026 at the time of the next 5-year monitoring event."

*If you would like to read David's full report please email us at [dionondehowa@yahoo.com](mailto:dionondehowa@yahoo.com) with David's Report in the subject line.*

## Dionondehowa's 2022 Calendar of Events

- May 15      *Annual Bird Walk* Guided by Rey Wells 9am - Noon Donation
- May 21      *Creek Restoration* 9am - 4pm Union College Workday *with David Hunt*
- June 26      *Taconic Music Concert* 4pm in The Muse Room and on The Lawn
- July 10      *Yoga Retreat with Kristi Plunkett* 1:30 - 4:30pm
- July 17      *Raindate for Yoga Retreat*
- Sept 18      *Annual singing of The Rift* 1 - 4pm
- Aug 20      *Introduction to Abenaki Workshop with Jesse Bruchac* 1 - 4:30pm
- October      *Union College workday* date to-be-announced

Visits to the Sanctuary by appointment are welcomed, please contact us at 518.320.0502 or [dionondehowa@yahoo.com](mailto:dionondehowa@yahoo.com)  
And if you are curious about Echology, Howling or The Stone Piles please give us a call.

☼ *Dionondehowa: Where Science and Spirit Communicate.* ☼



### *Yoga for Interconnectedness*

Sunday July 10 1:30pm to 4:30pm

This workshop will be led by Kristi Plunkett  
Registered Yoga Teacher and owner of *Yoga For Funks Sake*.

We come together to reaffirm our interconnectedness by dissolving our sense of separateness. Yoga means "to yoke or unite". When we imbue our yoga practice and our daily life with the sense that we are all yoked, the concept of separateness begins to unravel. With that unraveling we inevitably find ourselves with a very different worldview than the general human population, one in which we are not only interconnected but we are one and the same.

The concepts of "other" and "somewhere else" are an integral part if not the root of capitalism, borders, race, human supremacy, pollution, patriarchy, sexism, war, political parties, the gender binary, ageism, violence, ableism, environmental degradation, animal exploitation and extinction. The unwavering truth is that what we think we are doing somewhere else or to something or someone else is self injurious as well.

At this retreat we'll go beyond the idea that we are interconnected, to explore and embody the concept of "no self" and to arrive at the threshold between self and the one observing the self. We are both and neither. When we define the borders of self with identity, with "me or I" we fertilize the ground where the concept of separateness flourishes.

We will spend time together on our yoga mats, practicing yoga poses, breathing techniques, journaling, group sharing, meditation, self inquiry, shared sound exercises and guided meditation. This retreat will transform oneness from a mere concept into an embodied experience.

For further information and to join, contact [kristiplunkett@yahoo.com](mailto:kristiplunkett@yahoo.com)





## The Presumption of Human Supremacy ❁ Our Dionondehowa Board Responds

*{Please note, on page 3, Yoga Instructor Kristi Plunkett explores this query by way of our July yoga retreat.}*

It's so strange living in a human supremacist culture. Personal experience like when at a play recently, a man I had never met told me in passing how to get bats out of my attic by killing them with anti-freeze. Then later, someone helping me clean my new garage mindlessly mangled a large spider who had been living in an inaccessible window. I still think about that spider living there through the whole summer, spinning her web in the morning sun, eating small flies, perhaps laying eggs. Only to be killed with a broom. For some other being's idea of cleanliness. Then there's the large-scale things like popular solutions to climate change with no mention of nature – carbon neutral, net-zero, clean energy, maximizing efficiency. The intelligent living communities that maintained balanced systems for millennia are nowhere to be seen. Bison on the prairie? Old-growth forests? Not part of the solution. It's almost like the goal is not to "save the environment," but to save the current human civilization. With its cars, cities, and billionaires, plastic, rockets, and profits. Very strange.

~ Beth Ullion

I came across a passage on advertising in Magdoff & Williams' book "Creating An Ecological Society". The authors write that advertising and marketing aim "to convert people to consumption as a way of life, a path to personal happiness, a means of overcoming feelings of emptiness, loneliness..."

On a recent shopping trip, I purchased a set of three Korean pears. This type of pear is quite round and usually the size of two fists.

The fruit was protected with a clear plastic carrying case. The case separates the fruit from each other. They are also protected from the case with soft plastic swaddles. This packaging is designed to not only protect the pears during their long travel from Korea but to flatten out the curves of the fruit and create a perfect surface for - advertising.

Most packaging increases the surface area of an object. The more surface area the more space available to advertise.

The plastic packaging will stay on this planet for much longer than you or me or the pears. In fact, the company that it is advertising for won't exist either.

I am newly aware of the excessive packaging and advertising used for the benefit of capitalism. The next time I decide to pick up some pears from the grocery store, I'll let the fruits themselves - not the packaging - advertise for them. I now am committed to purchasing local in-season fruit with the least possible packaging.

I hope you, too, will join me in discovering all the many ways we can - and must - reduce commercial packaging.

~ Leilah Mariposa

Reflecting on one's own supremacy is always a daunting endeavor, unless you're a megalomaniac! In the context of consumer packaging, human supremacy is a fascinating exploration. At its core, packaging serves the practical purpose of containing a product during transport and storage – that is all. However, over the last century or so packaging has been thrust into the forefront of the consumer's mind. Why do we care how it is wrapped? Shouldn't the thing that really matters be the product contained within?

Our perception of product quality is heavily influenced by packaging. Would your new iPhone be as sexy if it came wrapped in paper? Perhaps a rhetorical question, as it most likely wouldn't make the journey from Zhengzhou China in one piece if it were wrapped only in paper. Packaging has been so perverted that an entire industry has developed to exploit these perceptions. Often the containerization expense represents a significant portion (5-20%) of the total product creation cost. In a world of Insta-gram filters, celebrity brands, and Tik-Tok fame where so much emphasis is put on the wrappings, it is hard to see an end of this packaging escalation. Perhaps if we as consumers look to the inside to assign value more often, then we will have a chance at swaying the tide.

~ Nicholas Ruepp

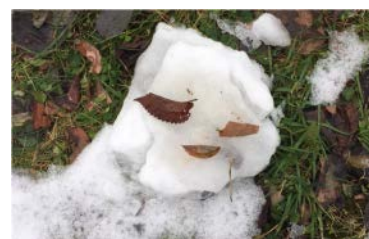
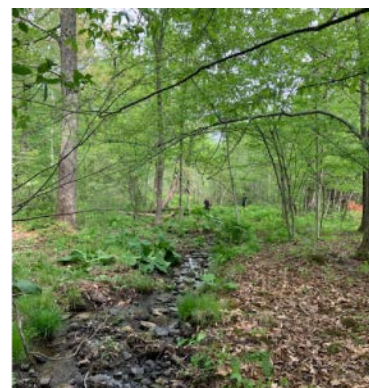


Sometimes it is hard for me to reflect on presumed human supremacy living in New York City. I'm surrounded by concrete. I get shuttled underground. The sounds of the city never escape me. Even when I'm in the park I don't feel like it's wild.

I think it's that extreme contrast between my daily life in the city and the Sanctuary that makes me appreciate what's special about Dionondehowa. It's more than the beautiful scenery, the mountains, the natural palette, the sounds of the wild. Dionondehowa is a place where humans are not supreme. It's a place where plants and animals come first. Here humans think hard about what's best for the birds that nest in the long grass. Here humans sweat and toil to support indigenous plants around the creek. Here humans learn from the trees and take time to study and promote old growth forest. I am thankful a place like this still exists where humans are not the first priority. I want to thank all those who've supported Dionondehowa over the years and allow the dream of forever wild to thrive. If you can this year, come to an event at the Sanctuary and see how it feels to be someplace that is truly different.

~ Eric Strebel







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Come to your senses at Dionondehowa!

☀ *Come to your senses at Dionondehowa!* ☀



*Some of Our Union College Workday Crew October 2021*

Dionondehowa Wildlife Sanctuary & School, Inc. is a non-profit land trust located on 217 acres bordering the Battenkill (Dionondehowa before the Dutch came) in southern Washington County, New York State. While the Sanctuary serves as a refuge and recharge area, the School is dedicated to Nature Studies and to the Healing and Expressive Arts, using them to engender social and environmental responsibility, in an atmosphere both contemplative and joyful. The name Dionondehowa, pronounced dye-on-on-duh-how-uh, was first recorded in 1709 and is listed in Beauchamp's *Aboriginal Place Names of New York State*. It means "She Opens the Door for Them" and may have referred to the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee) Confederacy.

In early Spring, 2021, Vermont Public Radio began to compile a list of Abenaki place names in the state. Since the Battenkill's source is near Dorset, VT, we inquired of Abenaki teacher Jesse Bruchac what the word Dionondehowa might be and with what meaning. TAWN TA ho WA - "she opens something for someone". So the mystery remains. Who is she? What is opened? And for whom?