

# DIONONDEHOWA

## Wildlife Sanctuary & School

ISSUE 22

148 Stanton Road, Shushan, NY 12873 \* 518.320.0502  
www.dionondehowa.org \* dionondehowa@yahoo.com

2024

### 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

#### **Board of Directors**

Danielle Anastasia  
Nancy Brown  
Bonnie Hoag  
Geoffrey Ovington  
Eric Strebel

#### **Advisors**

Mike Conklin  
CJ Davidsen  
David Hunt

### *Water Rights, Water's Rights, Water Rites.*

We were going to celebrate The Creek this year, anyway... and David Hunt. His twenty-two years guiding our Creek Restoration Project. David died on March 24, 2023. There are many ways that his absence is felt.

In May of 2023, Board Member Eric Strebel stepped up to continue David's work - again with lots of volunteers. Full-grown invasive honeysuckle bushes were cut down and dug up. See photos on page 5 of *before, during, and after*.



*David at The Creek with Volunteers 2022*

There is one tradition David started, which continues in his absence. The passing-of-the-water ritual. Gathered in a circle at The Creek - before the work begins - David would scoop water into his cupped hands, then begin passing it from hands to hands to hands all around the circle, establishing the unity of our intentions and acknowledging the Being we are working to free from all evidence of previous human endeavor. There has been a lot!

This year we're scheduling the workday for Saturday April 27, 10AM to 4PM, earlier than in the past to avoid dislodging nesting birds. Union College students will be here. Let us know if you'd like to join us.

On page 2 you can read the history of restoration work going back all the way to 1991 - even before Dionondehowa was incorporated and the first donation of 175 acres initiated the 501(c)3 forever-wild land trust, DWS&S. That article began as a letter to the Jackson Town Planning Board as evidence of our commitment to The Creek, the Sanctuary Wetland, and the Battenkill River.

The urgency to demonstrate the value of our endeavors came early in 2024 as we learned that a neighbor along the Sanctuary's western border is planning to sell (not lease) 138 acres of his property to Norbut Solar from Rochester, NY, for a solar "farm" - which would involve clearcutting 50 acres of forest and directly threaten the health of the Wetland which is the source of The Creek. The source of Our Beautiful Creek.

The threat to the Wetland Source of The Creek has also meant that we would have to learn about industrial solar "farms" and how they may not be as "green" as advertised. On page 4 please read some of what we've discovered.



**Our 2024 dedication:** This year all our work-and-play is dedicated to Dionondehowa's very good friend David Hunt and to Our Beautiful Creek who flows (for a mile) across The Sanctuary joining the Battenkill, the Hudson and the Sound.

The following is excerpted from our letter to the Jackson Town Planning Board, delivered to them at their February 6th Meeting.

Dionondehowa Wildlife Sanctuary & School, Inc. is a federally recognized 501(c)3 forever-wild landtrust and education center, containing 217 acres, along 1/4 mile on the Battenkill River. We incorporated in 1995 (see our incorporating purposes left-column of front page). And received the first donation of forever-wild land in 1996.

Of special concern to us - regarding the Norbut solar proposal - is the NYS-DEC-regulated stream that flows - for a mile - across the Sanctuary, emptying into the Battenkill. If you've "tubed" the stretch between Shushan and Rexleigh you've probably seen its stony delta. This stream - The Creek - originates in a Wetland on the neighboring farm, just across Stanton Rd. from the Sanctuary. For over 20 years this Battenkill tributary has been under restoration, thanks to ecologist Dr. David Hunt and hundreds of volunteers.

Under David's guidance, volunteer work crews - over the many years - have cleared the stream corridor of barbed wire (some antique), two rotting/rusting wood&metal automobile frames, lots of tires, a large dump dating from the 1930s, and full-grown invasive species (honeysuckle & rosa multiflora) thereby opening the stream canopy and restoring habitat for native species.

Prior to David's arrival, the stream was under the care of the Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District (and Joe Driscoll) - always with permission from the NYS-DEC. In 1991 Dionondehowa's cofounders - working with Joe and forester Christian Gearwar - wrote a Management Plan for the Stewardship Incentives Program - for the 181.1 acres, 175 of which would be donated in 1996 to initiate the 501(c)3 DWS&S. The SIP is available for anyone who'd like to read about these beginnings. The plans for restoration included the stream, yes, but as significantly, rebuilding the riparian barrier along the Sanctuary's Battenkill bank.

Other restoration included carefully installing a large conduit pipe in the stream where the previous bridge of an old logging-farming road had collapsed, and by so-doing ingress was restored for visitors to the Sanctuary.

Farther downstream - again with the SWCD and another crew of capable volunteers - Dionondehowa rebuilt a stone crossing in order to gain access to a beautiful field of bottomland. For all our efforts the ford washed out the following Spring.

Although of less immediate concern to the purpose of this history Dionondehowa made heroic efforts, with the SWCD and Trout Unlimited - to stabilize the Sanctuary's collapsing Battenkill riverbank. The ripped bank across the River - in place to support & stabilize the railroad tracks - made certain the dramatic erosion along the Sanctuary's bank. A lot of that fertile bottomland has sped downriver with each Spring torrent. A loss to us and a suffocating silt layer to river life.

In other significant efforts, we worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife in the Summer of 2000 for the major Wetland Restoration Project. Today, Dionondehowa's Wetland is flourishing as it nourishes The Creek.

Early in the 2000s Dionondehowa wrote our neighbors asking would they consider selling us the acres containing their Wetland - thereby insuring that the full freshwater system would be under our care. They did not respond.

Again, in January of 2024 - once we understood Norbut's proposal: that the 138 acres would be owned by an industrial solar developer from Rochester, NY, and that 50 acres of forest would be clearcut for the project - Dionondehowa wrote to ask would the landowners consider selling, instead, to their neighbors. They have not responded. We hope that, in time, they might choose to work with their community. We can offer a substantial downpayment, and with community-support a capital campaign could begin for full purchase .

## Gratitude is Abundance

### *Special Thanks to:*

**Lewis Steele** for his pro bono donation of time to the benefit of Dionondehowa

**Patti & Jim Evans** for refreshing the Blue Bird boxes for a new season of nesters

**Mike Conklin** for his gifted problem-solving, his generosity of spirit and for continuing as an Advisor

**CJ Davidsen** for patrolling the Sanctuary during deer season and continuing as an Advisor

**Skosh Snyder** for tuning us up for the TM Young Artists concert

**BC Condon** for her color copier donation

**Peter Andrea** for Newsletter design & production



Mike Conklin - wearing another of his many hats - at Bromley with the American Legion Post 634 Ski Team.

## Dionondehowa's 2024 Calendar of Events

- March 21** *Lyme Disease Study Group at Battenkill Books* 6 - 8PM  
Our Lyme Disease Study Group meets monthly. Anyone who would like to join is asked to read *Bitten - The Secret History of Lyme Disease and Biological Weapons* by Kris Newby, to watch the documentary *Under Our Skin* and to register by email
- April 27** *Creek Restoration Workday* 10am - 4pm
- May 11** *Bird Walk with Rey Wells* 9am - Noon
- May 18** *Conspiracy Theories - How Conversations are Silenced* 1 - 4pm
- June 23** *Taconic Music's Young Artists Concert* 4pm
- June 29** *Reading a Map and Reading the Land* 1 - 4pm
- July 13** *Techno-no-no: A Day on the Land without Devices* 10am - 3pm
- August 17** *Writers Retreat* 10am - 4pm
- September 21** *Equinox Celebration and the Annual Singing of "The Rift"* 1 to 4pm

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 Mounds please give us a call.

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

### *War Of Words Words of War*

They really bombed!  
Now don't go ballistic on me.  
The defense's case is bullet-proof.  
The cops are gunning for him.  
Let's kill two birds with one stone.  
We're gonna fight this Solar proposal.  
Kill for peace.  
That's the bomb. Drop the bomb. Bombs away.  
Shoot your mouth off.  
Hold a gun to your head. Jump the gun. Ride shotgun.  
Stick to your guns. Under the gun.  
Kill with kindness. Dressed to kill.  
Don't shoot the messenger.  
Shoot from the hip.  
Sweating bullets. Bite the bullet. Dodge a bullet.  
Looking down the barrel of a gun.  
  
What if... we all rethink  
our "arsenal" of martial words  
and concepts. Please let us  
know what alternatives inspire you.  
  
For Dionondehowa - in our current  
efforts - instead of *fighting* for  
The Creek & Wetlands we're choosing  
to advocate... for all the Beauty living here.



### *Wellspring*

Woodland wetland or gentle pond  
Determined stream what is your source  
Wading woodcock with whom to bond  
Playful swirling to pace your course

Mountain crevice or secret place  
Determined stream what is your force  
Turning away from rocks' embrace

Churlish churning to rush your course

~ Lori Giammattei



### *NYS-DEC State Regulated Freshwater Wetlands.*

- Dionondehova Wildlife Sanctuary & School
- Dionondehova Creek flowing to the Battenkill
- Wetland source on private land
- Rare Plants or Animals
- Proposed Norbut Solar

### *What We've Learned*

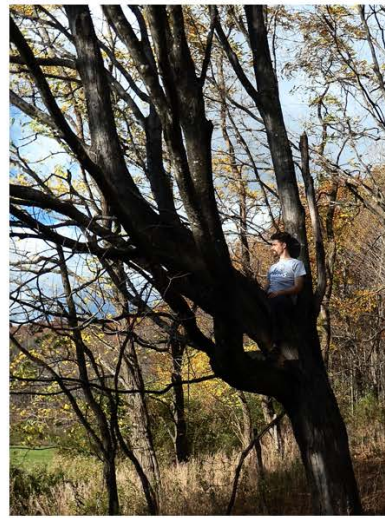
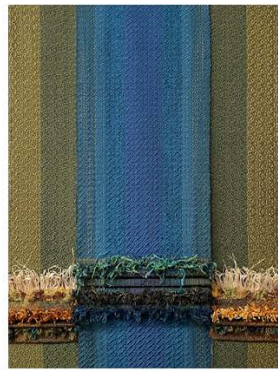
- ☼ As promised on page 1 of this Newsletter here is some of what we've learned about Norbut's proposal on land at the Sanctuary's western border.
- ☼ The solar panels would be visible to Sanctuary visitors and to the School's workshop participants.
- ☼ The 19.5 acre Wetland - which is shared between the neighbor's land and Dionondehova - is the source of The Beautiful Creek that flows for a mile across the Sanctuary and empties into the Battenkill. This distinct ecosystem will be compromised by the panel posts, solar panels, and fencing.
- ☼ Fifty acres of mature woods will be clearcut to accommodate the industrial solar facility. What will happen to the wild ones who have called this their home?
- ☼ Two watersheds - the Battenkill and the Hoosick - will be directly impacted.
- ☼ Norbut wants to subdivide the 138 acres of hillside farmland into 4 parcels before the panels go up. Is this to have readymade building lots at the time of decommissioning?
- ☼ Norbut Solar Farms (Rochester, NY) wants to buy the acres outright. Usually the land for industrial solar is leased. For us this suggests an "absentee-landlord" next door.
- ☼ Solar panels are not "green". Not in the mining or manufacturing, installation and lifetime. And when "decommissioned" solar is not "green" - if what we're left with is toxic waste on contaminated earth.

We invite our readers to go to [geoengineeringwatch.org](http://geoengineeringwatch.org), watch the Solar Radiation Management (SRM) documentary *Dimming*, and consider this question: Why are we intentionally blocking the Sun - daily and globally - at the same time we are milking the Sun for solar energy production? SRM's stated purpose is to cool the planet by injecting reflective nanoparticles of Aluminum Oxide into the atmosphere and creating the haze which blocks the Sun.

Geoengineering causes climate change.

It has corrupted the Hydrologic Cycle we depend on for Life on Earth.

- ☼ **Dreaming big here... and thinking beyond the threat we are feeling for Dionondehova... if it does become possible for our community to buy the neighboring property and the owners will work with us... we'll be launching a capital campaign - as we did in 2005-06 when we successfully brought the 42-acre Beaty property into our forever-wild land trust. If this does come to pass we will, again, turn to you - asking your help in raising the necessary funds.**



mountain stream  
all the voices needed  
to make one song  
*Stuart Bartow*



# DIONONDEHOWA

Wildlife Sanctuary & School

148 Stanton Road, Shushan, NY 12873



Come to your senses at Dionondehowa!

copied on 100% PCW recycled paper

☀ *Come to your senses at Dionondehowa!* ☀



*Apologies & Thanks to Grant Wood*

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 2021, Vermont Public 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 - "someone opens something for someone". So the mystery remains. Who is this someone? What is opened? And for whom?