

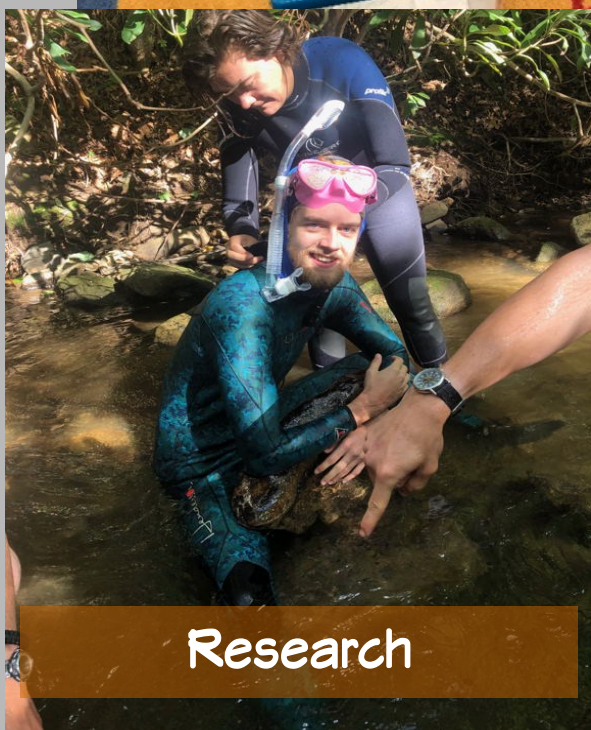


2019 Annual Report



AmeriCorps Service

Animal Ambassadors



Research



(Amazing) Volunteers

2019—Success...Again!

Measures of Success in 2019

The Trust staff is guided by the direction set by the Board of Trustees. In 2019 we accomplished:

- 1) Exhibit construction mostly completed with the help of many BMP owner donors which facilitated the creation and installment of beautiful graphic interpretive signs.
- 2) Interesting, well attended and complimented series of its annual Trust Talk lectures which included two Artist-in-Residence sponsorships. Both artists donated a piece of their work to the Trust's permanent collection.
- 3) The crafting and presentation of an eclectic, fun and educational slate of programming which included interpretive hikes, roadside wildflowers, animal ambassadors interaction.
- 4) Public education presentations to audiences in a five-county area in western North Carolina which continued to receive rave reviews from participants.
- 5) Research initiatives, which in 2019 realized the completion of the ramps study and the first half of predator camera-trap study (which will continue in 2020).
- 6) Hosting of the AmeriCorps Service program which facilitates the Trust reaching underserved students in Jackson and Haywood Counties.
- 7) Partnering with local businesses to fund our Adopt-a-School and Monarch/Pollinator Initiatives.
- 8) Another wonderful turnout for the annual Trust Party and we raised a record amount. THANK YOU BMP members, sponsors, volunteers and Preserve staff!
- 9) Successful maintenance and health of the Trust's animal ambassadors. The Trust said goodbye to Rusty the kestrel, its long-time resident and was able to find an able replacement with a male kestrel (Sparky).



Balsam Mountain Trust

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Trust Staff

Michael Skinner
Executive Director

Rose Wall, Jen Knight
Co-Education Directors &
Senior Naturalists

Eliza Hurst, Nicole Cook
AmeriCorps Service Mem-
bers

Board of Trustees –2019

Sabrina Watkins, Chair
Jan Kohl, Treasurer
Sheri Straw, Secretary
Stephen Barnett, M.D.
Rob Colton, M. D.
Kathy Nervie
Chip Schuppert
Mary Staton
Louise Sparks

The Trust Mission:

The Balsam Mountain Trust inspires people to be responsible stewards of the natural and cultural resources of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains through education and conservation leadership.


A Note From Your Board Chair and Executive Director

There's No Place Like Home

... 2019 was a year of wonderful experiences for the Balsam Mountain Trust. The new exhibits at the Nature Center were completed and we welcomed almost double the number of visitors to insights on research, living with wildlife and interactions with our animal ambassadors. Our educational outreach continued to provide unique environmental and live animal programs to over 5,500 children in Jackson and Haywood Counties. Thank you!

Our community owners and members showed up and hiked, gardened, listened to Trust Talks, danced at the party, bought art and contributed generously in so many ways to the success of the Trust's mission. Then, in early 2020, so much changed as our world began to cope with the pandemic. Of course, we'll talk about implications in the 2020 report, but some early insights make me even more thankful for the strength of this organization and our community at Balsam Mountain Preserve. As we entered the strange times of 2020, the board and staff of the Trust are mindful that the past generosity of our community has prepared us to weather these challenges. Our naturalists are rising to the challenges so that people can continue to benefit from life outdoors, resource stewardship and creative educational opportunities.

Sabrina Watkins
Chair, Board of Trustees



Looking back on 2019, I recall with humility, gratitude and excitement, all of the activities with which we were engaged. That's the excitement part. The gratitude is expressed because of the tremendous generosity the Trust consistently enjoys with people in the BMP community. These are folks who believe that the Trust is continuing to make a difference in the lives of the people who make the Preserve their home. This is also applicable to our engaging program participants outside the Preserve through our education and research initiatives.

And the humility descriptive is just how fortunate I have been to have had the support of our Board of Trustees, our staff, our volunteers and the community as whole. It is has, and indeed still is, humbling. I am a very fortunate individual.

The Trust will celebrate its 20th Anniversary in 2020 (interesting coincidence) and with that, will come an opportunity to really reflect on the history and accomplishments of this organization. The Trust has been very fortunate to have had so many talented, thoughtful, professional, dedicated and generous stakeholders over the course of its existence that it would be difficult to list them all and, thank them enough. Suffice it to state that the Trust does have an excellent reputation as a well-regarded nonprofit organization that serves both the owners who call the Preserve their home and its stakeholders, in many forms, outside the 4,400 acres that encompass the Preserve. I only hope that our messages have had, and will continue to have, a lasting impact on the lives of the people with whom we interact. We also hope that the mission we've undertaken has proven that we are good stewards of all the natural wonders to which we've been entrusted.

As we go into our 20th year, we would like each of our stakeholders to help us continue to meet our mission and join us on, what has so far, been a really amazing journey!

Michael Skinner
Executive Director

Education Programming Report

Rose Wall and Jen Knight, Education Directors and Sr. Naturalists

[Our mission for environmental education \(EE\) is to provide programming which encourages active environmental conservation in our region.](#) We

serve three primary groups: members, schools and the general public. We are happy to report that in its nineteen-year existence, the Trust has reached over 100,000 people! And nearly 6,500 were seen in 2019.

NC 2.0: Following the move into our now permanent home in 2018, we set to work in 2019 to make the vision for our new nature center come to life. After finalizing animal home construction, we created new interactive exhibits and signage indoors and out. The excitement of our new home and exhibits led to a lot of wonderful homeowner volunteerism and visitation. We had 640 drop-ins this year up from only 200 the year prior!



Member Outings: In 2019, folks enjoyed hikes, feeding frenzies, and summer camps for children. Trust Talks also continued to be a fan favorite, enjoying a 35% increase in participation from 2018! In an



effort to create a deeper sense of community, we continued to offer Garden Club, reading and writing workshops, and the occasional pottery program as group exploration experiences. We also hosted our second annual plant sale, making it easier for homeowners to purchase interesting native plants that help improve wildlife habitat on their properties. The funds we raise from the sale are used to purchase plants to enhance the nature center and pollinator gardens.

The Green Team helps to bring community action to sustainability on the mountain with representatives from the Trust, CA, and Preserve. A huge accomplishment this year was our leadership in getting recycling back on the mountain! We also partnered with the maintenance team to create mutually beneficial roadside mowing recommendations with a goal of improving wildlife habitat. These recommendations have been adopted and are in practice.

Public Outreach: In 2019, we are grateful to have maintained our 4th and 5th grade Adopt-a-School program and 1st and 2nd grade monarch program, reaching 10 schools and over 2,500 students at no cost to the schools. All of the public elementary schools in Jackson County and Haywood Counties are designated Title I, indicating that greater than 35% of the students fall below the poverty line. Teachers inform us that these programs fill a gap in curriculum and that they continue to use our program messages throughout the year. And student assessments continue to show a positive gain in knowledge and attitude.

“At the end of each year I survey my students to see which programs they like the best. In the 6 years you have been coming to our school, the Balsam Mountain Trust programs have always been their absolute, hands-down favorites! The content is spot on, aligning with state standards and the presenters deliver the programs in a fun and engaging way. I wouldn’t change a thing!” 4th grade teacher at Cullowhee Valley Elementary

Outside of these flagship programs, we made a calculated decision to reduce our school and public program offerings to accommodate work on NC 2.0. With that, we still reached nearly 2,000 people. We continue to enjoy our relationship with our education committee members including local teachers, school curriculum coordinators and environmental education experts. One thing that came out of this in 2019 was our participation in a large-scale regional teacher workshop where we gave teachers tools and ideas to make use of greenspaces and educate children outdoors.

AmeriCorps: This is the fifth year that we’ve been awarded designation as an AmeriCorps host site. Our AmeriCorps member delivers EE programming to our underserved communities in the region and has allowed us to more than triple our reach – wow! In addition to delivering most of the Adopt-a-School and pollinator programs, our member also strives to connect with underserved groups such as the REACH center for abused women and children. Eliza Hurst, our 2019 member, led the Trust in hosting our 3rd annual Migratory Bird Day Festival, welcoming 350 public participants, the largest crowd yet! Eliza finished her term in summer and we are excited to have ushered in our new service member, Nicole Cook.

Volunteers: We would like to give an enthusiastic thank you to our animal care volunteers! In 2019 we had 10 volunteers contributing over 1,000 hours at an estimated cost savings of over \$25,000 (Independent Sector estimate). A new paid summer internship was also a welcome complement to our animal care corps. We think of these programs as an extension of our educational outreach efforts and as a chance to help kick-start the careers of young people interested in the field.



2019—Education Program Stats

Education programming with the Trust is fluid and dynamic, i.e., we never know, from one year to the next, what type of participation we'll have in many of our programs, who might request a program, etc. This means then that our programming numbers reported in this document will fluctuate from year to year. Trust stakeholders should be confident, however, that Trust staff maximize opportunities to provide the 'public benefit' required for the maintenance of our 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status.

What follows are the end-of-year totals for programs and attendance in 2019.

Program Type	Programs Offered	Total Attendance	Additional Notes
<u>Member Programs</u>	93	1,368	Up from 2018 despite offering fewer, but more targeted programs
<u>Drop in visits to the Nature Center</u>	127	640	Up from 204 people in 2018 & 74 people in 2017
<u>Adopt-a-School</u> 4th – 5th grade	101	2,157	Offered at no cost to schools through sponsors
<u>Pollinator Program</u> 1st – 2nd grade	17	383	Offered at no cost by AmeriCorps member
<u>Schools (other) and Public</u>	30	1,943	Intentionally down from last year to account for work on NC 2.0

2019 Adopt-a –School Business Sponsors

Lisa Ferguson—Hazelwood Elementary
 Wells Fargo Foundation—Smokey Mountain Elementary & Fairview Elementary
 Sylva Family Practice (Dr. Roy Gallinger)—Scott's Creek Elementary
 Queen Family Foundation—Junaluska Elementary
 Pavey Law Firm—Jackson County School of Alternatives
 Cullowhee River Club—Cullowhee Valley Elementary
 Kevin Wells, 1st Citizen's Bank—Clyde Elementary
 Barbara Matzick-Huse—Junaluska Elementary, Monarch/Pollinator



2019 Trust Party

It's always awe-inspiring to see what happens when we celebrate the success of the Trust, illustrated by the support and generosity of the folks who call BMP their home. 2019's Trust Party was, again, no exception. Three BIG CHEERS go to all of the folks who made the event a total and unmitigated success. Hip, Hip Hooray x 3! Thank You! A big shout out to Kathy Nervie as the chair of the event. She was able to successfully herd a bunch of cats into a very productive and efficient unit. So much so that the Trust set another record for fund-raising totals at the party. That's amazing. Kathy also graciously accepted the assignment of chairing the event again in 2020. She'll definitely need, and have, some qualified R & R after this one.





Treebeard, the human Ent would like to thank all of the participants who purchased tickets and bidders who participated in the extremely successful 2019 Trust Party. The auction winners are listed here. Thank you all so very much!



Laura & Brian Philips, Nancy & Steve Ison, Donna & Rowdy LeMoine, Jan Kohl & Robert Farquharson, Cynthia & Chip Schuppert, Janie & Jim Stratigos, Catherine Enright & Walton Reeves, Sabrina Watkins & Jim Watson, Andi & Robert Colton, Haywood Landscapes, Elizabeth & Jay Monge, Teresa & Doug Franklin, Debra & Mark Vagasky, Rene & Brian Noonan, Patricia & Michael Dillick, Gale & Stephen Barnett, Sharon & Ken Torok, DonnaJean & Bill Mamrack, Tammy & Mark Miles, Terri & Dave May, the Herring Family, Karen & Andrew Manidis, Kathy & Kathy Nervie, Carol & John Landers, Brian Jones, Nancy & Steve Neubeiser, Karen & Bob Hannan, the Hanson Family, Sheri & Dave Straw, Leslie & Jim Moster, Linda & Ed James, Cindy & Al Tunstall, Pam & Mike Frey, Lynn & Tom Pokorny, Mary & Dan Connell, Beth Sorrentino & Michael Skinner, Marianne Lyon & Rob Howard



2019 Financial Statement

Operating Revenue

Contributions: individuals, businesses, foundations	\$ 188,677
Events, auctions, ticket sales,	
Gifts-in-Kind	\$ 85,310
Program Revenue	\$ 13,426
Other, e.g., grants, interest,. etc.	\$ 6,257

Total Operating Revenue	\$ 293,670
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Operating Expenses by Program

Education	\$ 73,856
Fundraising	\$ 22,548
General & Administrative	\$ 57,595
Nature Center (includes remodel)	\$ 55,875
Resource Stewardship	\$ 6,261

Total Operating Expenses	\$ 216,135
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Net Income (Loss)	\$ 77,535
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2019 Annual Ask Donors

The Balsam Mountain Trust would like to acknowledge and thank the donors listed who contributed to the Trust's success and the fulfillment of its ongoing mission.

(Note: Every attempt has been made to provide correct information about donors and amounts of their gifts. Please contact us if you notice any errors of fact or omissions.)

We would like to especially thank our anonymous donor who continued to provide the \$25,000 challenge grant in 2019, as a means to encourage more donor participation with the Trust.

Eagle Club

(\$10,000 and above)

Jayne Parker & Beckie Yon, The Walt Disney Foundation, Anonymous

Black Bear Club

(\$5,000—\$9,999)

Patricia and Mike Dillick, Marianne Lyon & Rob Howard, Bobbye & Ken Bowdon, The Harold Sweatt Foudation (Kate & Hal Reed), Sabrina Watkins & Jim Watson, Mary & Bill Staton, Mary & Don Edmondson

Bobcat Club

(\$2,500—\$4,999)

Jan Kohl & Robert Farquharson, Pam & Mike Frey, Linda & Ed James, DonnaJean & Bill Mamrack, Sheri & Dave Straw, Martha & Mike Summerford

Whitetail Deer Club

(\$1,500—\$2,499)

Catherine Enright & Walton Reeves, Mary & Marshall Bassett, Anne & Jim Kistler, Shellee & Richard Starr, Mary & Marshall Bassett, Linda Outlaw & David Kitchens, Suzanne & John Morse, Shellee & Richard Starr, Susan Swope, Elizabeth & Jay Monge,

Whitetail Deer Club

(\$1,500—\$2,499), con't.

Karen & Andrew Manidis, Kimberly & Richard Zimlich, Mary & Marshall Bassett

Brook Trout Club

(\$500—\$1,499)

Mary & Larry Arbaugh, Julie & Sam Belfore, Julie & Mark Evans, Elizabeth & Jay Monge, Nancy & Steve Neubeiser, Linda & Mac Purdy, Cindy & Chip Schuppert, Nancy & Wayde Seidensticker, Beth Sorrentino & Michael Skinner, Louise & Dave Sparks, Cindy & Al Tunstall, Marcia & Murray Goldman, Nancy & Steve Neubeiser, Karen & Bob Hannan, Pam & Mike Frey, Jeanne & Dave Walters, Lou & Tom Grady, Charles Small, Janie & Jim Stratigos, Teresa & Doug Franklin

Monarch Butterfly Club

(up to \$499)

Sharon & Paul DeBacco, Sheri & Eric Krueger, Lynn & Thomas Pokorny, Elektra & Mills Ariail, Gale & Stephen Barnett, Sandy & Nathan Leder, Bobby & Connie Croswell, O'hara & Bill Croswell, Mirtha Casimir, Barry Fox



