



**Merck Forest & Farmland Center Inc.**  
3270 Route 315, PO Box 86  
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On a recent visit to the *Mettawee Community School*, a third-grader confided in me that the first thing he does upon arriving in his classroom is to closely examine his teacher's footwear. His favorite days, he shared, are those when "her shoes aren't fancy." When I asked him why, he explained that boots mean they'll be headed outside.

At the time, I smirked and told him I hoped she'd have her boots on that day. Later, as I headed back up the mountain to the Visitor Center, the full weight of his statement hit me. Here, in the midst of a still-raging pandemic, with the climate crisis feedback loop tightening, this young fellow is starting his days with hope—hope that he would experience the simple joy of heading out into the woods.

It is because of your involvement with *Merck Forest & Farmland Center* that this student and his classmates have the opportunity to spend countless hours building forts, hiking, investigating nature, and developing their own personal land ethic on our 148-acre satellite campus adjacent to his school. Through your support, hundreds of children from around the region are able to explore our hill-top farm and working forest on field trips, at workshops and in summer camps. Your generosity and commitment to our mission - *to inspire curiosity, love and responsibility for natural and working lands* - ensures that over 15,000 visitors a year are able to meet the animals, hike trails, experience the splendor of a setting sun, spend a night under the stars, pick berries, watch birds, explore the pond, wade in the creek, and more.

These experiences matter. It is clearer than ever that it is time for us to collectively re-engage with the natural world. We can no longer take the systems and processes that shape this blue and green orb that is our collective home for granted. We must share our love of its azure skies and rugged hills, and from that place of love, champion its protection.

**MFFC 2021-22 Trustees:** Merrill Bent, Dinah Buechner-Vischer, Kat Deely (Secretary), Jim Hand, Greg Hopper (Treasurer), Mark Lourie, Sam Schneski (V.P.), John Stasny, Sue Van Hook (President), Brian Vargo

On behalf of the staff and trustees here at Merck Forest & Farmland Center, thank you for helping us do this critical work. The Annual Fund provides our team with the resources necessary to steward these hills, fields, and forests so that all who come can experience the contentment and hope afforded by time spent in the natural world.

Your support of our Annual Fund, at whatever level you are able, keeps our gates perpetually open to all, strengthening visitors' connections to natural and working lands. Your contribution helps ensure that we are able to work towards providing a healthy future for all species both here on our hilltop home and beyond. For that, we are deeply grateful.

See you up on the mountain!

Sincerely,



Rob Terry  
Executive Director



A tax-exempt, 501(C)(3) corporation in Vermont that has, for over 70 years, inspired curiosity, love and responsibility for natural and working lands through land stewardship and conservation education.