

Birds of Vermont Museum  
900 Sherman Hollow Road  
Huntington, Vermont 05462  
[www.birdsofvermont.org](http://www.birdsofvermont.org)

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# the Birds of Vermont Museum's Bridges to Birds



*The mission of the Birds of Vermont Museum is to provide education, to nurture an appreciation of the environment, and to study birds and their habitats using woodcarvings and other Museum resources.*



*connecting you to natural history in art*

**The Birds of Vermont Museum connects you to birds in nature and art. Our mission: to provide education, nurture an appreciation of the environment, and study birds and their habitats using woodcarvings and other Museum resources. Our *Bridges to Birds project* gets us there by bringing together natural history, wildlife, learning, and you.**

### ***What We Are***

The Birds of Vermont Museum—where *natural history meets art*—is a one-of-a-kind destination for children, adults, tourists, and friends. Housed in a renovated old barn, the Museum’s twenty-seven year old collection boasts over 500 unique wood carvings.



Founder Bob Spear’s unique wood carving style and attention to detail have taken this traditional art form to new heights. Richly detailed exhibits show birds in natural systems. Here, Museum visitors find quiet, inspiration, and education. Outside, neighbors and travelers enjoy live birds, hike nature trails, and restore themselves in our bird sanctuary.

### ***What We Do***

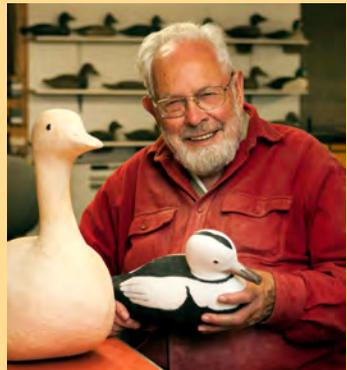
We teach, delight, inform, play, and investigate. From wood carvings that almost come to life—over 260 species of local, migratory, and non-native birds—to citizen science for all ages, we help children and adults, teachers and tourists, seniors and scientists all discover more about the fascinating, complex, elegant, and necessary feathered animals that share our world.

The Museum encourages you to get involved in arts and crafts, ecology, recreation, backyard birding, and international conservation. We help you build connections to nature, regain peace in a busy world, learn a new craft, and participate in local activities with a global reach. We help you become an active, valued steward of the earth.

### ***A Brief History of Bob***

Bob Spear (1920–2014) taught himself whittling at a young age. He began carving basswood birds at age eighteen. He carved while working at GE and Green Mountain Audubon, and then into retirement. His passion for carving, sharing, and teaching about birds, with help from his family, friends, and community, led to the creation of the Birds of Vermont Museum.

Bob continued to carve throughout his life, and the Museum currently holds over 500 carvings. They show Vermont’s nesting birds, wetland species, raptors, and wintering birds, all in realistic habitats.



## **THANKING YOU**

Each donor may choose to receive a corresponding *thank you gift* from the Birds of Vermont Museum.

### **\$20 — CHICKADEE**

*Chickadees* receive a bumper sticker and two (2) passes to the Museum.

### **\$50 — BLUE JAY**

*Blue Jays* receive a set of 10 note cards of carvings and 2 passes to Museum.

### **\$100 — CARDINAL**

*Cardinals* receive a hand-carved Comfort Bird (from trees downed by the flood) and 2 passes to Museum.

### **\$500 — NUTHATCH**

*Nuthatches* will have their names (or the names of those they wish to remember) included on a plaque mounted on or near our new bridge, *plus* a complete set of the previous gifts.

### **\$1,000 — SCARLET TANAGER**

*The first twenty (20) Scarlet Tanagers* will receive a framed print of Vermont artist Libby Davidson’s plein-air ‘*Painting #5*’, showing Sherman Hollow Brook, *plus* all the Nuthatch-level gifts.



### **\$2,500 — HERMIT THRUSH**

*The first five(5) Hermit Thrushes* will receive Dinner for Two in the Treehouse, *plus* the Nuthatch-level gifts.

### **\$5,000 — PEREGRINE**

*Peregrines* receive a one-of-a-kind Vermont or bird-themed handcrafted wall-hanging by quilt artist Carol McDowell, *plus* the Nuthatch-level gifts.

### **\$20,000 — SNOWY OWL**

*The Snowy Owl* donor will have the opportunity to accompany Denver Holt of the Owl Research Institute for several days in one of two research locations. The Donor can choose to visit Alaska to see snowy owls, or Montana to see numerous other species of owls. Airfare, room and board are included if travel arrangements are made with the Museum. The Donor will also be recognized on our memorial plaque.

*“Every time I crossed that bridge, I believed it was built to stay. It would be forever.”*

— Ali Wagner,  
birder and member

## DONATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Your support is vital. How can you help? Four ways.

### *Partner*

Schools and businesses, community groups and other non-profits all can work with us to bring *Bridges to Birds* to reality and fulfill their missions too.

The Center for Technology Essex worked with us to provide a hands-on practical learning experience for their students *and* helped create the Treehouse.

Do you need a space to meet or to present a talk? Have Scouts who need a project? Science teaching needs? Future gardeners? Williston Elementary worked with us to learn about birds and to create an exhibit.

Imagine your needs and ours being met, together. Call, email, or set up a meeting.

### *Volunteer and Intern*

Whether you have a few hours or a day every week, we welcome you as a volunteer, indoors and out. We train (if you need it).

Need practical work experience or academic requirements? Consider an internship.

From day-to-day tasks to significant one-time contributions, our volunteers and interns have done it all. You can too.

### *Donate*

The easiest way to build bridges! We happily accept donations online, in the mail, and in person. Cash, checks, credit cards, and e-transfers are all easier every day.

You can call (802) 434-2167 with your credit card info, or send a check in any amount at any time to

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Online, visit our Donations page at <http://birdsofvermont.org/donate.php>, click your favorite option (PayPal, JustGive, or Network for Good), and follow the on-screen instructions.

### *Share*

Love birds? Woodcarving? Art? Visit us, bring a friend, tell a neighbor. Speak of our need or your love for the Museum. Write about us in a blog or the newspaper. Call a relative or email a colleague. Join a class or a scheduled bird walk, spend a morning or a weekend.

Share the word... and the place.

## A DISASTER ... AND A DREAM



Before the summer of 2013, we had been discussing how the Birds of Vermont Museum could be more accessible as well as how to expand our offerings. A treehouse, properly sited, might achieve both. This was just an idea with a few sketches to back it up. The Board of Trustees had already granted approval to initiate planning.

But on July 3, 2013, there was a storm—an intense, terrifying, powerful downpour of a storm. Visitors,

day campers, Museum staff, Bob Spear, and his daughter Kari Jo Spear all watched the unfolding event just outside the Museum doors.

Kari Jo wrote in her blog the day after:

*And then water just started pouring down across the road, down the bank, across our path, and down a narrow road to another bigger brook which had a bridge leading to our land on the other side. We just watched, completely stunned, as probably thousands of dollars worth of damage just happened.*



The walkway from the parking lot to the entrance was gone. Trails were gone. Bird-friendly gardens were damaged. The carvings, thankfully, were untouched.

We had to recover. We would need help. We would need to make choices.

So we made a *new* plan. It brings together access, the treehouse, the trails, and the gardens.

And we call it *Bridges to Birds*.

## *We Need You to Make it Happen*

### *Partner*

Two organizations meeting two needs together

### *Donate*

Send a contribution in any amount

### *Volunteer*

Help out in person on small, large, and day-to-day tasks

### *Share*

Communicate your love of birds, carvings, and the Museum



# Bridges to Birds...

# Building for You and with You



## *A Four-fold Project*

**Bridges to Birds** incorporates disaster recovery, resilience, and prior long-term plans to make outdoor experiences at the Museum accessible to *all* visitors, including people with limited abilities and families with small children. This four-phase project also expands conservation and educational opportunities and increases the number of locations available for quiet appreciation and contemplation of the natural world.

### Connecting to People: Bridge and Walkway

**\$104,000**  
*(still need \$56,500)*

This phase means

- \* New wildlife observation areas
- \* Fully ADA-compliant access from parking to Museum
- \* Protected riparian areas and stream bank stabilization
- \* Publicly visible donor acknowledgments
- \* Improved bird habitat
- \* Resistance to future flooding and precipitation events

We are working with the State of Vermont, the Town of Huntington, and civil, structural, and hydrological engineers to design and build a bridge and walkway after installation of a larger culvert under the road. Interpretive signs, plantings, and welcome information will follow.



### Connecting to Nature: Interpretative Trails

**\$17,000**  
*(still need \$9,000)*

This phase provides

- \* Outdoor exploration
- \* Citizen scientist access
- \* Routes for monitoring and birding walks
- \* Integration with and protection of woodland, meadow, and near-pond habitats
- \* Peaceful retreats
- \* Well-maintained trails

Volunteers, staff, and interns repair trails, footbridges, and handrails. We continue to work routing water away from trails, and providing sturdy footing where needed. New maps, signage, and guide materials will be created.



### Connecting to New Perspectives: The Treehouse

**\$30,000**  
*(still need \$2,500)*

This phase showcases

- \* An accessible (ADA-compliant) treehouse, reached by a gravel ramp
- \* Opportunities to observe birds in the forest canopy
- \* An outdoor classroom / exhibit space
- \* New nature-focused programs and activities

The treehouse is *already open!* We completed the construction thanks to a generous partnership with Center for Technology Essex, Evergreen Roofing, and dozens of volunteers. A grant from the Vermont Community Foundation helped with treehouse-specific programming. The last donations will fund educational signage and seating.



### Connecting to Conservation: Bird-friendly Gardens

**\$6,000**  
*(still need \$2,000)*

This phase includes

- \* Demonstration gardens
- \* Native plants
- \* Quiet contemplation spaces
- \* Habitat and foraging diversity for native birds
- \* Inspiring and encouraging Vermont gardeners and would-be gardeners

The Gardens phase integrates previous work by staff, interns, and gardeners on local, bird-friendly plantings, garden layout, and native species. Garden beds, paths, booklets, informative signs, and short education tours all extend the experience.

