



Dear Friend,

You are receiving this letter because you share our special connection with Farm & Wilderness, the Plymouth Valley, and Lake Ninevah--so we want to share with you the challenges, setbacks, and, thank goodness, high points of the 2023 camp season.

The challenges will be familiar if you followed the national news, Frances' summer updates, or both: devastating flooding followed by a norovirus outbreak.

The high points came daily, as staff and campers demonstrated their resilience and resourcefulness, developing deeper connections to each other and this special place, living the F&W Value of Sustainability: "We are not separate from the land, the water, and the life all around us." But the setbacks are real: the physical and financial impacts of these adversities are significant, and it will take time, effort, and financial support to recover.

We are writing to you because we were all involved in the events of the summer (whether we were managing repairs and supporting staff and campers in Vermont or providing counsel from afar), **we understand the urgency of Farm & Wilderness's needs**, and we felt compelled to reach out to ask for your support.

## **Historic Flooding Hits Vermont**

In July, F&W's corner of Vermont was hammered with a record-breaking *9 inches* of concentrated rainfall. While the historic flooding affected the entire state (you may have seen images of downtown Montpelier underwater), the impacts in Plymouth were devastating.

The rain washed out roads and bridges leading in and out of Farm & Wilderness and damaged roads, driveways, and culverts at Woodward and Ninevah camps. Because of the extensive road damage in and around F&W, a week of Barn Day Camp was canceled. Some cabins were flooded, Woodward Reservoir was not safe for swimming for 10 days, and the one road into Red Spruce Grove was so damaged and materials to repair it so scarce that we were forced to cancel its second session, with great regret. The extensive flooding and damage to camp facilities, roads, and bridges as well as program cancellations resulted in **financial losses exceeding \$125,000**.

## **And Just When We Thought We Had Recovered...**

Putting the F&W heart, soul, and handiwork to the test, the team quickly patched up the roads to keep camp moving, celebrating Session 1 campers and welcoming Session 2 campers. Eventually, F&W was able to return to full camp programming, which included sending out trips and planning for Fair. But just as things began to feel normal again, there was a norovirus outbreak at Timberlake that impacted over 50 campers and staff with likelihood to spread further.

F&W was left with no choice but to cancel Fair, as well as one of our biggest Fall rentals. All in all, the combination of lost revenue and expenses, including cleaning up infected camps, resulted in additional costs exceeding \$100,000. In total, Farm & Wilderness incurred \$225,000 in unexpected expenses this summer.



## Big Success Along with our Big Challenges

While the Summer of 2023 tested the F&W community in unprecedented ways, it also saw the remarkable success of Affordable for All, F&W’s groundbreaking, transparent tuition and financial aid model. This initiative - which extends beyond Camperships - strives to make Farm & Wilderness accessible and affordable to all families. It's a commitment to equity and integrity, and it's making a measurable impact.

In 2022, the F&W community donated \$1 million towards the launch of Affordable for All—with gifts of all sizes. To date, this initiative has funded over \$900,000 in Camperships to more than 290 families (a 58% increase from 2022). Remarkably, through Affordable for All, F&W attracted and enrolled triple the number of campers from families with household incomes of under \$50,000 than expected and nearly 20% more campers from middle income families.

As F&W plans for Summer 2024, the focus is to repair the damage suffered this summer, increase readiness to respond to the impact of climate change, and build on the success of Affordable for All. F&W seeks to raise \$1 million by the end of 2023 to fund 2024 Camperships and sustain Affordable for All for the future. **In total, the goal is to raise \$1,225,000 by the end of 2023 (to date we’ve raised nearly 60% of that goal).**

## Will You Join Us?

Like you, we all love Farm & Wilderness and want it to thrive long into the future. Recovering from this summer’s challenges and maintaining our commitment to Affordable for All will be crucial to that future. **So we invite you to join us and make a donation today – to Crisis Recovery, Affordable for All, or both. Please give as generously as your heart and circumstances allow.**

In Peace,

**Becca Steinitz**

Former Board Clerk, Camp Staff,  
Camp Director, Camp Parent

**Chris Moncrief**

Program Adviser, Former Camper  
and Camp Staff

**Jay Kullman**

Sustainable Resources Director  
and Crisis Recovery Lead

**Len Cadwallader**

Former Executive Director,  
Camp Parent

**Polly Williams**

Director of Alumni Engagement,  
Former Camper, Camp Director and  
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