



## SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS NETWORK

Deepening Learning & Practice for People & Planet

### ***New England Dana Meadows Fellows Gathering Cobb Hill Eco-village, Hartland, Vermont February 17, 2012***



New England Dana Meadows Fellows convened a regional Fellows gathering in February 2012 at Cobb Hill. The event was designed to reconnect, meet Fellows across cohorts, exchange information about regional sustainability projects, explore collaborations, and enjoy the personal and professional camaraderie of others grounded in the legacy of Donella (Dana) Meadows. The day included hiking, making lunch together, and an afternoon in session. Participants came from Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut for the one-day event, joining hosts living at Cobb Hill. Nine of the fifteen New England Fellows were able to attend, representing the non-profit, business, and government sectors.

Participants included: Alex Bauermeister, Angela Park, Ashley Lanfer (with children), Beth Binns, Beth Sawin, Edie Farwell, Jay Mead, Jed Davis, Lynn Stoddard, Mike Dupee, (with family), Natalie Starr, Phil Rice, Shanna Ratner and Virginia Farley.

## On the Land

Those who arrived early went for a long morning walk, visiting the bench designed in honor of Dana where Cobb Hill members often go to reflect and think. At the top of an undulating cow pasture, surrounded by woods, the bench is under the protective branches of a towering oak tree with a panoramic view of the Connecticut River Valley.



*Some of the hikers: Jay Mead, Phil Rice, Virginia Farley, Lynn Stoddard, and Jed Davis.*

A plaque at the bench is inscribed with this Rainer Maria Rilke poem, which was a favorite of Dana's. Participants read it aloud as they looked across the meadow to the hills of New Hampshire.

*God speaks to each of us as he makes us,  
then walks with us silently out of the night.*

*These are words we dimly hear:*

*You, sent out beyond your recall,  
go to the limits of your longing.  
Embody me.*

*Flare up like flame  
and make big shadows I can move in.*

*Let everything happen to you:  
beauty and terror.*

*Just keep going. No feeling is final.  
Don't let yourself lose me.*

*Nearby is the country they call life.  
You will know it by its seriousness.*

*Give me your hand.*



*Mike Dupee in the kitchen prepping or snacking?*

## Team Building Lunch

Other participants arrived to make lunch together, having brought an item or two to contribute to Operation Stir Fry which was ably led by Angela Park, head chef extraordinaire. Lunch was delicious and nutritious, with everyone finding their role in the preparation. Sitting together at a long table sharing food once again sparked several reminiscences of the Fellows Program workshops and all the seasonal meals and stimulating conversations we had in that same dining room.

## Group Discussions

After lunch the group gathered in the den, reflecting on when they were first at Cobb Hill as Fellows and how much has happened to each of them since that early time. Check-ins were spacious and thoughtful. Topics that arose included a diversity of subjects:

### *Personal Mastery*

- leveraging your sense of purpose
- balancing, gratitude, trust, work, and family care
- intention, balance, and embracing technology but not letting it be time sink
- acceptance, the last stage of the grieving cycle

### *Resilience*

- focusing on one strength, or on diversity when we know that diversity builds resilience
- humor leads to resilience
- the power of being a generalist

### *Systems*

- leveraging large change and going deeper
- systems modeling
- strategic effectiveness
- social networking

### *Issue Areas*

- climate change denial
- does our government represent us?
- rural wealth management
- Fellows scholarship fund

A lively, open discussion followed on several of these topics.

## Continued Quarterly Gatherings

The group decided to meet at Cobb Hill quarterly. The next date is Friday, June 1. All regional and other Fellows passing through are very welcome!

Read more about the Fellows Network here:

<http://www.sustainabilityleadersnetwork.org/fellows-network/>