



Brattleboro Museum & Art Center

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Ecologist Tom Wessels to Lead Interpretive Walk on Wantastiquet Mountain in Connection with Current BMAC Exhibits

Brattleboro, Vt. — The acclaimed ecologist and author Tom Wessels will lead an interpretive walk on Wantastiquet Mountain on Sunday, September 6 at 10 a.m. Organized by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in connection with its current exhibits “Waterfall” and “Art of Vermont: Landscapes from the State Collection,” the easy-to-moderate walk will last two hours and will take place rain or shine. Participants will meet at the museum at 10 a.m. then make their way across the Hinsdale bridge to the base of Wantastiquet Mountain to begin the walk. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$4 for students, \$3 for seniors, and free for BMAC members and children 5 and under; pay at the door or call 802-257-0124, ext. 101.

This program is based on Tom Wessels’ book, “Reading the Forested Landscape, A Natural History of New England,” which introduces readers to approaches used to interpret a forest’s history while wandering through it. Using such evidence as the shapes of trees, scars on their trunks, the pattern of decay in stumps, the construction of stone walls, and the lay of the land, it is possible to unravel complex stories etched into our forested landscape. This process could easily be called forest forensics, since it is quite similar to interpreting a crime scene.

“This is not what one might consider a typical art-museum event,” said BMAC Director Danny Lichtenfeld, “but it so happens that two of our current exhibits deal with our natural landscape, and Tom Wessels seemed to be the obvious person to elucidate those issues.” “Waterfall,” a video installation by Shuli Sade, is part of a larger art project organized by the Great River Arts Institute focusing on the Connecticut River watershed. “Art of Vermont: Landscapes from the State Collection” features Vermont artists’ depictions of their home state and includes two etchings by Brian D. Cohen, who has illustrated two of Wessels’ books.

Tom Wessels is an ecologist and founding director of the Master’s Degree program in Conservation Biology at Antioch University New England. He is former chair of the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation, which fosters environmental leadership through graduate fellowships and organizational grants. He serves as an ecological consultant to the Rain forest Alliance’s SmartWood Green Certification Program. In that capacity Wessels helped draft green certification assessment guidelines for forest operations in the northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. Tom has conducted landscape-level workshops throughout the United States for over 30 years. His books include: “Reading the Forested Landscape,” “The Granite Landscape,” “Untamed Vermont,” and “The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future.”

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Major support for the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center’s 2009-2010 season is provided by BMAC members and Entergy Vermont Yankee, Foard Panel, C&S Wholesale Grocers, Sam’s Outdoor Outfitters, and Chittenden Bank. The Museum’s exhibits and gift shop are open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Tuesday and Wednesday. Regular admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for students. Members and children 5 and under are admitted free of charge.

Founded in 1972, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center presents art and ideas in ways that inspire, educate, and engage people of all ages. Each season features compelling new exhibits of contemporary artwork by regional and internationally acclaimed artists, complemented by lectures, artist talks, film screenings, and other public programs. Located in historic Union Station in downtown Brattleboro, at the intersection of Main Street (Route 5) and Routes 119 and 142, the Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information call 802-257-0124 or visit www.brattleboromuseum.org.

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