



# BCT Stewardship Journal: July 2024

## Katie's Thoughts from the Trail: Looking at the Fungus Among Us!

As I write this journal entry, I am delighted to hear the sound of rain drops pinging against the Hay Conservation Center roof and the crackling of lightning in the distance. In a couple of days, I plan on taking a nice long walk around the Hay trails to see all the new mushroom additions to the forest understory. You have probably noticed a surplus in mushroom growth a few days after a good rain. But why do these mushrooms seem to magically appear after a rainstorm?

The mushrooms we see above the ground are actually just the visible parts of a bigger organism known as Mycelium. The Mycelium is an extensive network of thread-like structures that grow under the soil, absorbing nutrients from decaying matter and water, similar to the roots of a plant. With enough moisture, the Mycelium forms reproductive organs, which we know as mushrooms. Mature mushrooms release thousands of spores into the environment, usually with the help of the wind, water, or animals. These spores will then eventually form another Mycelium, starting the entire life cycle over again.



*Chicken of the Woods at Hay Conservation Center*



*Mystery white mushroom bursting through the Hay driveway!*

There are so many kinds of colorful mushrooms to see throughout Brewster, so be sure to keep your eyes peeled next time you are on the trail. You may spot some flat Turkey-tails on a tree, a bright bumpy white Amanita popping up through the leaf litter, or a brilliant orange Chicken of the Woods at the base of a tree. As always, take only pictures and leave only footprints!



*A Yellow Fly Agaric popping through some moss along a Hay trail*