



Pascommuck post

Summer 2014

Projects Update 2013-2014



CONSTRUCTION

In my 2013 report, we left Rambo Bator and his bush-whacking troops hacking their way out of the invasive jungle at Old Trolley Line Conservation Area. Since then, aside from normal trail maintenance, we have tackled three bigger and more complicated projects: The Pomeroy Meadows Extension off Ranch Avenue and Paul Street, the Brickyard Brook Extension (Mutter Field) between East Street and East Green Street, and an awesome shoreline steps replacement at John Bator Park.

Pomeroy Meadows is a fascinating 22 acre mix of forest, field, glacial gullies, streamlets and wetland abutting the Manhan River, and connecting to our original 15 acre parcel behind the Big Y in Southampton. In March of 2013, we awarded the trail construction contract to Conservation Works of Hatfield, but by the time all the permits and the Notice of Intent went through, it was already October. They had to hit the trails fast and furious, constructing footbridges, embankment steps (one set is at least 50 ft. long), bench-cuts, and two viewing platforms. Whenever possible, native lumber, such a tamarack was used, and purchased locally. Miraculously, the company completed this tremendous project by the beginning of December. Their finished product was masterfully crafted, sturdy as Mt. Tom, and rustically attractive.

But that was only part of the story. Trust volunteers were responsible for most of the actual trail clearing, plus other details involved with conditioning a new conservation area. Fortunately, our Land Protection Specialist, Gerrit Stover, coordinated the entire program here, and practically carried out many tasks single-handedly, such as installing border signs, trail delineation and marking, signage, and also worked to promote good relations with neighbors and developer David Gartska; not to mention obtaining a much needed easement from abutter George Brehm. So throughout the summer and into the fall, many volunteers worked frantically to cut a path through woods, open areas, and swampy terrain, battling overgrowth, tall weeds and invasive plants.

At last, on Saturday morning, December 8th at a well attended ceremony at the Ranch Avenue entrance, we dedicated the new trail in honor of former

Tall Tales *From the Trails*

City Planner, Stuart Beckley. After the various speeches and accolades, on a light cover of early snow that had fallen the previous night, we led tours of our new Gem. Those in attendance were impressed and grateful for what we had accomplished.

great progress

By spring, of this year, we now could put our attention towards the Mutter Field endeavor. Gerrit Stover, once again played a major role in coordinating the details, while Landscape Architect, William Canon graciously donated much of his time and talents to create a general plan for the area. This included repairing two culverts near the East Street and East Green Street entrances, creating a small parking lot off East Street, and building a universally accessible trail from the parking lot that would circumvent the borders of the nearby wildflower meadow. A picnic area in a grove next to the meadow is also planned. The permitting process has been slow and complicated, but trust members Linda Bush, Tom Lautzenheiser, and William Canon have been making progress in dealing with the Conservation Commission and the State. Hopefully, construction will begin in the late summer or early fall.

Our Save Open Space in Your Neighborhood campaign has been the main focal point for raising funds for these two parcels. Patty Gambarini and Doug Wheat spear-headed many events to help fund Pomeroy Meadows (neighborhood house parties, a presentation at Pop-Corn Noir, and much more). Gerrit Stover and Marty Klein secured a State DEP Recreational Trails Grant for Mutter Field. CPA funds for both parcels were awarded. Events by Nash Gallery, Big Red Frame (formerly Eastmont Custom Framing), and the Easthampton Community Center (Wayne Perrea, Loudville Lead Mine show) added to the coffers, as did donations from Easthampton Savings Bank, Florence Savings Bank, several businesses, and many individuals. The Mutter Field proposal may cost up to \$150,000.00, so fundraising must go on. Any additional donations will be enormously appreciated.



The shoreline steps replacement project, though smaller in scope, nevertheless was no picnic. Local contractor and super volunteer, Kevin Mulligan, took on this rugged task last fall, doing the leg work needed for all permits. He, along with an occasional helper or volunteer, removed the old timbers, dug out the area so that a new precast set of cement steps could be installed, added boulders and new soil and then seeded the disturbed section. Local artist, Dana Salisbury, collaborated with us to ensure that the railings and steps aesthetically complimented the surrounding landscape, and also enabled us to obtain donated rocks and ornamental grasses from Richard Richardson of 3 Sisters Sanctuary in Goshen, which added finishing touches to the picture this past spring. More than ever, these steps are a popular spot for fishermen, as well as for individuals just wanting to relax and enjoy the view of the Rubber Thread pond. Unfortunately, vandalism of the railings and newly placed rocks has taken place recently. This seems to be an ongoing problem at the park.



What is next on the agenda? Too much, as usual. Give me a few months to recuperate and I will come back with more tall tales in another newsletter.

John Bator, President

A Tale of Two Cameras

Last fall (or possibly earlier) I suggested to our Board that we purchase motion-activated trail cameras to install on our properties in order to get pictures of wildlife and vandals (ugh). The Board approved and authorized me to purchase two cameras. After conducting some research, I bought two Moultrie D-555i cameras plus security lock boxes for each one. They take pictures in 10 second bursts or videos.

We decided to install one at our Dwyer property on Terrace View, as we've had several incidents of vandalism there, including dumping trash, setting up paint ball courses, partying and more. I chose our newest trail at our Pomeroy Meadows area as the location for the second camera, as I'd seen animal tracks there.

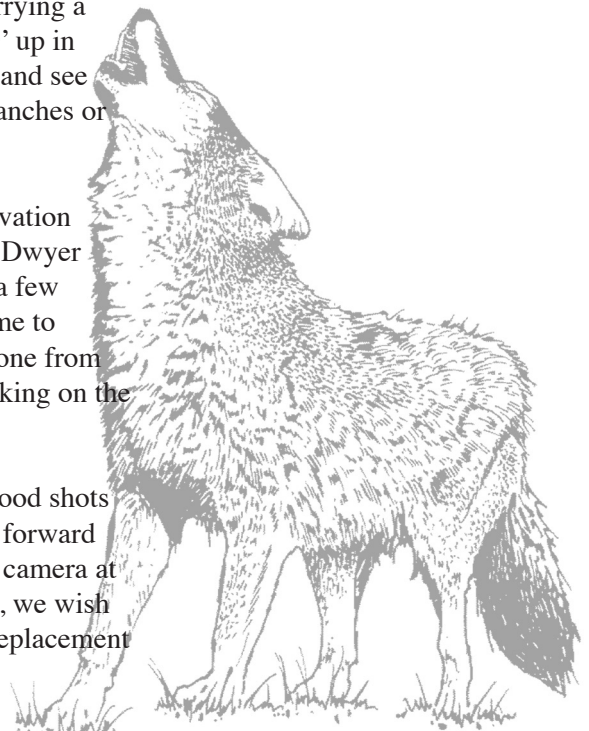
Picking the right location is a challenge. The camera and box must be mounted in a place where it's not too obvious (to the vandals anyway) and where the "action" is likely to take place. I went into the woods carrying a ladder, settled on a couple of locations and mounted them about 10' up in trees. Two or three weeks later, I returned to get the memory cards and see what the cameras had captured. All of the shots were of moving branches or rain/snow. How disappointing. No critters or bad guys.

So, I re-sited them to new spots (the Pomeroy camera by our observation deck, overlooking a bend in the now frozen Manhan River and the Dwyer camera above a trail that the offenders might be using.) Returning a few weeks later, I switched out the memory cards and eagerly went home to look at them. Again, nothing of interest on the Dwyer cam but the one from Pomeroy was a different story. Several shots showing a bobcat walking on the ice, two coyotes on the prowl, a rabbit and a raccoon. Cool!

That was in March. Since then, I discovered that it's easier to get good shots without all the foliage we have in the warmer months. I'm looking forward to next fall and winter for more wildlife photos. Sadly, in June, the camera at Dwyer, high up in a tree, was smashed by you know who. Actually, we wish we did know, so they could be held responsible. I will purchase a replacement soon.

Recently, my time has been taken up with other PCT matters, leaving me with little time to attend to the cameras - changing cards/batteries and siting. I will happily train a volunteer who is willing assume these tasks in the future. You can contact me at 413-529-9594 or forager2@gmail.com.

Marty Klein



Bobcat on ice.

Pascommuck Spring Plant Sale

The Trust held its annual spring plant sale on May 18th at Big E's on Union Street, thanks to the kindness and generosity of Mike Superson who allowed us to use his parking lot for the morning. The weather cooperated and it was a great sale, with lots of unusual plants being offered.

We hope that you had an opportunity to attend this event. The large assortment moved so quickly that it was hard to keep up with marking and tagging them for sale. The first two hours were very busy, with plants being delivered and immediately sold; many almost as soon as they were unloaded from the trucks. Our plant donors were very generous to us this year and gave many beautiful plants which we had not had before, and some of you are likely enjoying them right about now. We sincerely appreciated all the donations of plants, trees, shrubs, annuals, and perennials, that various people made.

If you missed this sale, we will have another one sometime in September. You will receive a postcard with the selected date in late August so please be sure to mark your calendar. We hope to be able to offer some additional new plants. We also had some really nice plants left over from that sale and they will be offered again at the Fall plant sale.

We had a wonderful turnout, for both the plant sale and the Raffle that was held. In the event you are interested in who won what at the raffle, the winners were as follows:

Gary & Kathy LaCroix- *1st prize winners- Wicker Rocking Chair w/gardening essentials donated by Sue Bishop, a Trust member.*

*2nd prize – Sue Mason, 3rd Prize – Barbara LaBombard, 4th Prize – John Neveu
All of whom received baskets, done by Terry Perrea, another trust member.*

Please know that we do not take your good will donations for granted and sincerely appreciate your support of this fundraiser. If we have somehow missed thanking you for your contributions, we want to take this opportunity now to say a sincere THANK YOU!

The work we are doing in land preservation would not be possible without the support and hard work of YOU folks, who dig and donate to us yearly and thereby help us work toward these goals. We thank you for continuing to support our efforts. Hope to see YOU in September.

Shirley H. Smith, Board Member

Please note: if you somehow missed sending in your member renewal for 2014, it is not too late- just fill out the member renewal slip in this newsletter and send it in. Thanks!

Membership and Donation

NAME(S): _____

STREET: _____

TOWN / STATE / ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Please check desired membership level and mail this form with your check to:

Pascommuck Conservation Trust
P.O. Box 806
Easthampton, Massachusetts 01027

Supporter: (\$6) ___ Patron: (\$75) ___

Individual: (\$15) ___ Corporate: (\$100) ___

Family: (\$25) ___ Steward: (\$100) ___

Contributor: (\$50) ___ Sponsor: (\$150) ___

Life Member: (\$1000) ___

Additional tax-deductible donation for:

Unrestricted \$ _____

Save Open Space in the Neighborhood \$ _____

Conservation area stewardship \$ _____

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HELP THE TRUST BY

- Donating plants for plant sales
- Plant preparation/gardening
- Donating prizes for raffles
- Event setup/takedown (Fall Festival, etc.)
- Event staffing
- Monitoring a Trust area near me
- Trails/property construction and maintenance
- Preparation of mailings
- Office work (filing, database, etc.)
- Publications (editing/design/photos/writing)
- Publicity/media relations
- Grantwriting/fundraising
- Professional services (accounting, etc.)
- Land conservation (landowner contacts, planning, etc.)
- Advocacy (letters/emails/phone calls to support conservation)
- Serving on Board of Directors
- Other: _____



***Pascommuck Conservation
Trust, Inc.***

*Preserving our past . . .
protecting our future*

SACRED GROUND



When I go for a walk in the many conservation lands in Easthampton, it is not for physical exercise alone. It is for spiritual exercise. You see it is in the woods where I pray, listen and discern life. It is in nature that I commune with God. For me, walking in the woods is a spiritual discipline which feeds my mind, body and soul.

One of my favorite Pascommuck Conservation Trust lands is the Ed Dwyer property, which is on the banks of the Manhan River. The ground on which I walk is, for me, holy and sacred. When my foot touches the dirt, I feel an instant sense of gratification. I sigh with joy. My soul begins to sing. My feet dance. My heart takes delight in what I am about to experience spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally.

I can breathe in the woods. The air is pure and uncontaminated. I can listen to what I need to hear while surrendering my ego to my Higher Power. I let go of all pretenses because I know I am one with my Creator. I am safe. I feel at peace. I can take a deep breath and smell the earth.

I feel safe in the woods, confident that I can share what is on my heart and soul. I confess to God my weaknesses and growing edges and know that it is a safe environment.

I can open up my heart and feel loved.

I can open up my ears and listen to what I need to hear.

I can open up my mouth and pray for people in need.

I can vent my frustrations and literally feel myself becoming lighter.

I know I am loved and I know I am forgiven by a power much higher than me.

It is in the woods where I can tune out the world and get recharged from that world that often wears us down. I feel at peace after my walk, renewed in spirit and refreshed in my soul. My mind has more clarity. I am ready to face the world again.

Ellen Petersen is a member of the Board of Directors of the Pascommuck Conservation Trust and is the conservation steward for the Ed Dwyer Property. Ellen serves as a Minister at the Riverton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Riverton CT and as a Spiritual Care Coordinator for the Sisters of Providence.

Volunteers and New Members Needed

The Trust is looking for new members. If you are interested in joining the PCT and/or simply volunteering your time for various work parties doing cleanup and trail maintenance, please contact Molly Goodwin at goodmol@hotmail.com.

Pieces of Easthampton

I'd like to introduce myself...I have been elected Pascommuck Conservation Trust's (PCT) next Vice President. I can't tell you how excited and humbled I am to be part of this amazing organization. The idea of saving open space for hikers, birding.. just simply having the ability to easily access a trail in your city is remarkable. Exploring new spaces in the city is on my list of things to do this year; just recently we walked one of our trails which I had not been able to get too previously. I'd like to share my experience of this discovery; ironically it happens to abut my favorite meadow!

I pass this meadow every day; never tiring of the way it transports your eye over the rolling hills ending in an open sky. We entered the trail at the end of Brittney Lane, the access point to the PCT property, Broad Brook Meadows. The grass leading down to the trail was freshly mowed, I know it's done by a volunteer and I felt appreciation for those who go out of their way to help, it certainly does take a village. As we walked the trail I noted a feeling of nostalgia, having spent many hours playing in the woods and fields as a child, it brought back the excitement you feel when discovering new places. We followed the trail to a winding brook that had a deep pool at one turn. The flow was fairly rapid since we had a substantial rainy season and the entire side of the stream was surrounded by ferns and cabbage, you could smell the wet pines. We continued to the end of the property, as we climbed the slight slope on the hill which seemed to go on forever, we could see a deep green, unending rise of grass through the opening in the brush. (It was a Sound of Music moment). We walked up on to the base of the rolling hill into an area that was truly amazing; it was the largest piece of green on the planet. I felt like I was one of the very few who came to a secret place – very special. We knew we were on the opposite side of the meadow which I passed every day. The picture was complete.

Preserving open spaces is imperative as you know; allowing for trails and open fields to explore will certainly make many memories. I want to help in some small way to pay it forward. This field has not yet been protected as open space or conserved in any way. PCT needs your help on this as well as many other projects to keep Easthampton's open space accessible to everyone.

There was a lecture series by C. Sanderson recently on happiness – what many of us think makes us happy - *1. Education, 2. Money, Good weather, 4. Family* – but surprisingly the results of the study were *1. Exercise, 2. Giving to others, 3. Nature, 4. Family*. Well, PCT covers three of the four things that truly make you happy; you can always bring family or friends with you on your hikes, exploring Easthampton!

Dianne McLane

Please check our ongoing News and activities at www.pctland.org.
For those of you who have not been able to get out and hike the Pomeroy Meadows trail there is a Virtual Tour of the trail on YouTube. The link to the video can be found on the home page. Enjoy!

Pascommuck Conservation Trust Board

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Pomeroy Meadow Roots



Marty Klein