



Pascommuck post

Summer 2015

President's Report 2015



Lest anyone has the notion that the trust has been rather quiet lately, allow me to highlight some of the projects we've been grappling with in the past few months. As you will quickly discover, alas, we haven't been idle by a long shot!

One of our most vexing concerns for many moons has been the need to update our database, making it more efficient and easier to operate. With the help of computer data whiz Kate Schneider of Vermont, Julie Smith, Gerrit Stover, Brian Dillon, Shirley Smith, and Sue Walz, we are finally reaching our goal here. Special thanks to Jane Andresen for volunteering to become our database manager, taking over for Julie Smith, who did a fine job working within the boundaries of the old system.

At Brickyard Brook Conservation Area, the intermittent stream near our East Street entrance has been giving us many problems. The culvert crossing the road is nearly clogged with sediment, the stream's course keeps changing, our neighbor's fence is jeopardized by siltation buildup, and our trail is being flooded. We are collaborating with the city DPW to remedy the situation, but so far, it's been like riding a slow boat to China.

Our Annual Meeting in February went well. Guest speaker Artie McCollum, a Private Lands biologist, gave an interesting presentation on the construction of the accessible trail near the Fort River in Hadley. In April, I gave a slide show at the Lathrop Community on the open space parcels our trust has helped to save since our beginnings in 1982, and Marty Klein elaborated on our plans to build an accessible trail at our Mutter Field property between East and East Green Streets.

This year our Annual High School Scholarship was awarded to senior Lauren Dolinski. Congratulations, Lauren!

For his Eagle Scout project, local Boy Scout Bryan Fleury will be applying a weather proof sealer on some of our new embankment steps and the major footbridge at our Pomeroy Meadows Conservation Area. Michael Caron and I installed two bluebird houses in the meadow

progress

Tall Tales *From the Trails*

there. These were constructed and donated by Craig Goff of Amherst. Our May plant sale proved to be quite successful this year- busy the entire morning!

Some of the unsold potted perennials from the spring sale were lent out to decorate the tents at the Cottage Street parking lot during the June Cultural Chaos. Unfortunately, during this event, trust member Debra Tautznik had a fatal accident, leaving our community in shock and grief. Deb had been a staunch supporter of the trust and the arts, regularly volunteering her time and talents to various organizations. Our hearts reach out to her husband Michael, her family, and legions of friends.

With help from Robert MacDonald, we applied for a UPS grant to make improvements to John Bator Park. Robert and his wife Nance were instrumental in the installment of the Angel Monument at the park, and have worked relentlessly to help maintain not only the monument area, but the entire park. Recently they have taken it upon themselves to extend the park into the bordering city Municipal parking lot complex. This magnificent, ambitious project will not only enhance our property, but compliments and blends in well with the new Promenade on the banks of the Nashawannuck Pond across the street.

Riverside Industries hosted our June monthly meeting. We exchanged information regarding our respective activities, and hope to collaborate on projects in the future.

At long last, with scores of temporary barriers to deal with along the way, the culvert repair project at our Mutter Field East Green Street entrance is completed. The culvert has a new lease on life, railings are in place, a rail fence has been installed between our property and that of Alice Mutter, a new drainage basin is handling storm water coming in from the cul-de-sac, the entrance pathway is mulched, and an entrance sign now greets visitors. Pioneer Landscapes was awarded this very challenging task. Placing huge rocks into the main banking over the culvert as a riprap became a daunting assignment, so they decided to sub contract that portion out to a dude named Cyclops, whose chief occupation consisted of casting boulders down upon the ships of ancient mariners from the cliffs above, where he lived. After a brief stint at the cliffs of Dover, he retired to the hills of the Mount Holyoke Range, where he occasionally reverts to his old ways, and drops a few pieces of basalt onto cabin cruisers speeding along the Connecticut River down in the valley. I must admit, that guy has a good eye for this business, and did a magnificent job of positioning those stone missiles.

The second phase at Mutter field will hopefully get started this fall, and involves building a parking lot at the East Street end, and connecting it to the main field, where an accessible trail will traverse the perimeter of that wildflower meadow. Benches, picnic tables, and a rain shelter are also planned for that area.

Well, that's enough of a work load to contend with for the moment. I don't know about you, but I'm bushed! Oh, and just a reminder - if you haven't paid your yearly dues this past spring yet, please make an effort to do so soon. Remember - Cyclops is watching.

John Bator

new projects

Accessible Trail? What Accessible Trail?

Mutter's Field Update

Sometimes optimism can cloud reality. I confess to succumbing to that a bit regarding this project. Last fall, I believed construction on the actual trail would take place this summer. However, due to regulatory requirements that we had to fulfill, I've amended my projection to this fall, which I believe is realistic.*

Phase 1 of the project consisted of repairs to a culvert at the East Green Street entrance to the property. Sounds simple enough, right? We wish.

Easthampton's Conservation Commission and the MA Department of Environmental Protection reviewed our plans for the work (Big thank you to landscape architect Bill Canon for donating his time to create the plans!) and gave us their order of conditions/scope of work that would comply with their regulations regarding work, such as we proposed, that is to be done in wetlands. The actual work commenced in the late fall of 2014, was halted due to the winter, re-commenced this spring and



was finally approved/completed in early July of 2015. The cost was in the neighborhood of \$35,000 and was paid for by a grant from the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation that we received in 2013.

That was a big hurdle! As you can see in the photos, Pioneer Landscaping did a beautiful job. In addition to providing an entrance to the property at the end of E. Green St., this entrance will enable us to access the area with our mower, so that we can maintain it once the trail is open.

Phase 2 consists of the parking lot/ramp at the East St. entrance, as well as the trail itself. We

submitted plans to the Conservation Commission in June of this year and expect that they will issue their order of conditions to use at their mid-July meeting. When we have that, then we can (finally!) prepare Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that we'll send to contractors. Bids will be reviewed and a contractor for the work chosen and the rest of the work will hopefully commence and be completed before the winter. This is assuming that the contractor has room in their work schedule.*

Phase 2 will be mostly funded by a \$185,000 grant we received this past April from the City, via the Easthampton Community Preservation Act. To date we have raised around \$235,000 to pay for the new trail. We're proud of that! But, we still need to raise an additional \$25,000 for benches and an accessible picnic area we plan to construct along the trail. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Won't you please make a generous donation to this most worthy cause? You can donate through our website, pctland.org (you can also set up a monthly donation here) or by mailing a check to us at PO Box 806. Thank you so much for your support!

Stay tuned... *Marty Klein*

Pascommuck Spring Plant Sale

Plants for Sale

The plants were awakened and packed in vehicles tightly. Where are we going? they whispered to each other. None of them knew. They had already been through some adventures in their lives, so they were not afraid. Some had been potted and repotted to give them more comfortable temporary homes. They all had lived through the winter of 2014/2015 so they were hardy souls. The ride was a short and uneventful one. When they stopped, many hands were reaching for them. They were unloaded quickly in the sunny parking lot of Big E's Supermarket on Union Street in Easthampton. Many were eagerly grabbed up right away by excited customers. I know exactly where I am going to put you!, the customers were saying. Oh look at this one!, others were overheard exclaiming. I need this!, some exclaimed.

Many of the plants were rearranged to be near their peers. It was a happy and busy place. Customers milled around asking questions, making ,save, piles of plants and buying raffle tickets. Smiling faces abounded. It was a buzzing beehive of activity for about 5 hours! New plants arrived throughout the sale and added to the variety. Many, ohhs and ahhs, could be heard when new plants arrived. Their owners would explain what they were and what they preferred, and then leave them off for the sale to go to new homes.

The plant sale is held twice a year and is Pascommuck Trust's primary fundraiser. It takes many volunteers and many hours of work to come to fruition. At closing time, several truckloads of plants have been sold. The plants are off on new adventures again. They will be nestled down in the soil to grow. The remaining plants will be brought back to the holding yard and nurtured along until the next sale. Then it all happens again. Thank you to all of our lovely volunteers and Board members for all their help – and to the many customers and plant donators!

Dawn Ackley

Please note: if you somehow missed sending in your member renewal for 2015, it is not too late- just fill out the member renewal slip in this newsletter and send it in. Thanks!

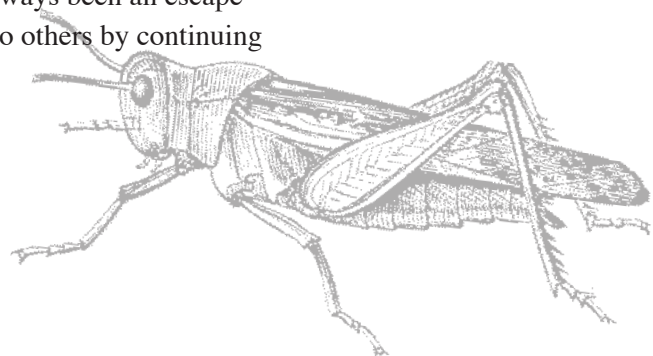
2015 Edward Dwyer Award Recipient

Lauren Dolinski, a senior at EHS is the recipient of the Edward Dwyer scholarship given by Pascommuck Conservation Trust this year and following is her winning essay.

“They say a kid’s backyard is like the whole world to them, no matter how small or isolated. Everything seems bigger when you’re small and even the tiniest experience can rock a child’s perception of the world. I’ve always found truth in this statement, because when I was younger, I found new things to discover and new corners to explore every day in my backyard. My parents would smile from the stairs as they watched me scour our mere strip of grass looking for worms, catching grasshoppers, or calling out to squirrels, remarking on how I was definitely “outdoorsy”.

My explorations didn’t stop in just my yard, as I was always eager to take the dog for a walk around the pond, play in the woods at the park, or go fishing at the crack of dawn. I’ve always been grateful to my parents for encouraging my expeditions in nature; there is no doubt they were influential in fostering my love of the outdoors and wildlife. Neither one of them were surprised when I told them I wanted to study natural sciences after high school. Choosing a plan for your future is never easy, but when formulating one for myself I started to get excited thinking of everything I could formally learn, everything new I could experience outside of my little backyard. Along with my parents, the very town I live in has given me opportunities to find natural sciences as my interest. For the past few years I have volunteered at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton, where I’ve learned new things about the environment and met some very nice people. I believe I’ve been lucky to grow up in the Easthampton area with many opportunities to enjoy nature and hardworking organizations to make that possible. The Pascommuck Conservation Trust contributes to this town by protecting the natural lands the area has, making it possible for people like me to enjoy and explore the environment. Thanks to the resources provided here in Easthampton, I can take my volunteer experiences with me when I go to the University of Maine in Orono to study wildlife ecology in the fall. Nature has always been an escape for me to explore and relax, and I hope to give the same to others by continuing to conserve and protect wildlife in the future”.

recognition



Birding in Easthampton



Those of us who like to bird, including me, and who are lucky enough to also live in Easthampton, are very fortunate to have great places to bird in our backyards. Both Mt Tom State Park, with its hundreds of acres and various habitats, and Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, which was recently recognized by Yankee Magazine as the “Best Birdwatching “ location in Massachusetts, are very close to our backyards and have great birding. But those of us who live here have great birding opportunities literally in our backyards, the open space owned by the Pascommuck Conservation Trust. I recently took a walk one morning through Pomeroy Meadows, one of Pascommuck’s newest acquisitions, to see how many different species of birds I could see and/or hear during my hour walk down to the Manhan River and back. I didn’t start my walk until 9AM, rather late for birding, but I counted 30 different species during that hour. There were four types of woodpeckers, including the uncommon pileated woodpecker, which I normally hear more often at Nonotuck Park. The ethereal flute like song of the Veery, which always tells me that summer is really here, was heard often. The explosive call of the diminutive ovenbird, with its two syllable call *chertee chertee CHERTEE* increasing in volume, was heard many times, along with pewees, phoebes, redstarts, common yellowthroats, and scarlet tanagers. Thirteen of the bird species I counted are our migratory birds, those that come north to breed, and then head south to spend the winter. The woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, robins, and goldfinches are here year round to enjoy. During your walks, remember to occasionally look up. We have turkey vultures, great blue herons, red-tailed hawks and bald eagles regularly flying above us. Check out Pascommuck’s web site to find an open space area near you and go for a walk, and look and listen. You’ll enjoy yourself.

Linda A Bush

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.

Web site update

The PCT website was recently updated to a new theme thanks to the efforts of Jo Landers of Jo Landers Business Services. The updated theme now has a calendar indicating the dates of monthly board meetings as well as other PCT activities. Clicking on one of the labeled slides on the home page will bring you to the relevant page which might be about a specific property, or an ongoing project, or activity. Trail maps for all properties are available to view or download. Donations to the Trust can be made through the Network for Good. The link for the site is located in the upper right hand corner of the home page. Also available on the site is the current newsletter as well as an archive of past newsletters.

Keep visiting the website for ongoing progress of our current Mutter Field Accessible Trail project.

We Get By With A Lot of Help From Our Friends.....

Given that Pascommuck Conservation Trust is an ALL volunteer land trust, relying on volunteers is what keeps us going. For well over 20 years, PCT has worked to protect land in Easthampton by channeling the dedication and determination of local people who care about conservation and their natural surroundings. The board has been the driving force in these endeavors and we have seen many wonderful people come and go over the years. Some of the current board members such as John Bator, Shirley Smith, Sue Walz, Dawn Ackley, Bill Burgart, Marty Klein and Tom Lautzenheiser have been around for near to decades. Newer members have brought renewed energy and perspectives. All have contributed in countless ways and have brought a passion that has supported our growing acquisition of protected land. However, the board could not do its work without the invaluable volunteers on whom we rely for property maintenance, property monitoring, fundraising, raffle donations, plant donations, plant sale support, land preservation, newsletter creation, plant transportation, etc. Bill Canon has helped us to make our latest project of an accessible trail come to fruition. Peter Brooks has created brochure boxes for us and Kevin Mulligan has helped us with innumerable construction projects. Gerrit Stover is our master of identifying land for conservation projects and creating signs and trail work. Sue Bishop and Terry Perrea are the artists behind our plant sale Raffle creations. Bob and Nancy MacDonald put tremendous energy into John Bator Park where the Christmas Box Angel resides. Stephen Donnelly helps with publicity and Beverly Wodicka is a wiz with our newsletters. Linda Bush has brought great knowledge and level headedness to countless board discussions and land preservation. Julie Smith was a huge help with our database before handing it over to our new support, Jane Andresen. We would never get the plants to the plant sale without Lillian Alvarez, Bob Smith, and Ed Procon who also helps in many other ways. Dana Salisbury, Bobbe O'Brien and Becca Belofsky are great additions to the plant sale preparation and day of sale. Leslie Harrington often has a wonderful variety of plant donations along with so many people too numerous to name. Mike Superson loans us his parking lot for the plant sale as well as often donating various amazing items to sell.

So please join us in our efforts to preserve the natural beauty of our city and to keep the habitat healthy for the bears and other creatures who have brought so much life and joy to our homes. We welcome any and all for single one time projects or on-going efforts. We can always find a place for you and you will be welcomed with smiles and much appreciation. For information, contact Molly Goodwin at 413-529-1805 or goodmol@hotmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!!

Molly Goodwin

*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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