



# *Pascommuck post*

*Summer 2017*



## *President's Report*

2017 is flying by fast, and we've been literally flying fast ourselves - never a dull moment for this small but productive land trust. Our latest newsletter covers much ground, and contains a variety of informative topics. Marty Klein posts an update on Mutter Field. Andrea Tovar, a resident of the Hamptons subdivision on Main Street, shares her essay, inspired by a walk she took this spring at our Pomeroy Meadows Conservation Area. PCT Annual High School Conservation Scholarship winner, Hannah Miller, discusses her past activities and future career hopes. Molly Goodwin gives us an overview on trust volunteers.

Newsletter aside, there's much more news to talk about, for sure. So far we've had three work sessions on our properties, involving weeding, mowing, pruning, edging, cleaning up flower beds, trail clearing, and trash removal. Also, Patty Gambarini coordinated fall and spring weatherproofing sessions for both observation decks at Pomeroy Meadows. Removing fallen trees over trails or borderlines is a constant battle, and we've had more than our share this year already. Our Annual Meeting in February was one of the best yet - full house, informative business meeting, and guest speaker Dr. Richard Little gave a crowd-pleasing presentation on the amazing geology of Mt Tom and the Holyoke Range. "Holy Basalt!" New bird houses, crafted by Amherst resident Craig Goff, were installed at Pomeroy Meadows. Our properties maintenance record sheets and volunteer database have been updated and revised by Linda Bush and Molly Goodwin, enabling us to project more accurate yearly maintenance costs and volunteer contacts.

# President's Report

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Despite threatening rain on a wet weekend, our spring plant sale was again quite successful, with numerous fine raffle items, a good mix of plants, and helpful garden tips for the asking. Dianne McLane was instrumental in procuring auto window decals bearing our trust logo. Anyone wanting one or more can call me at 527-3584, or pick some up at our September plant sale. Newly-designed trust brochures were printed up early this year. Find them at entrances to many of our properties, or at the plant sale as well. The Easthampton Land Protection Collaborative continues to meet on a regular basis. Members include reps from PCT, Kestrel Land Trust, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, the City Planning Department, and the Mass. Department of Fish and Game. It's goal is to preserve what's left of open space around the Easthampton area, concentrating on the foothills of Mount Tom and the Manhan River Greenbelt.

## 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](mailto:goodmol@hotmail.com).





On a final note, the trust wishes to express our gratitude and appreciation to all our hard working, dedicated volunteers. Without their assistance, we simply could not exist very well as an effective organization. In future issues, we hope to shed more light on what they do for us, and why they volunteer in the first place. And remember, we always are looking for more individuals to lend a hand for the cause of land protection. Don't forget our September 23rd plant sale at Big E's Supermarket parking lot, and by all means, hit the trails - it'll put some wind in your sails.

*John Bator, President*

*Please check our ongoing News and activities at [www.pctland.org](http://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!*

*appreciation*



# Mutter's Accessible Trail Field – Embraced by the Community

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## *Update*

*In a word...completed.*

Two and a half years in the making. But who's counting?

*Here are some recent highlights:*

- This May, John Bator and I planted native flowering plants (donated by Dr. Lesley Harrington) in the two fieldstone raised beds that were constructed last summer along the trail. These butterfly gardens will attract pollinators and provide an additional sensory experience for visitors.



- Also in May, PCT received a \$5,000 grant from Florence Savings Bank for stewardship of Mutter's Field. Big thank you to the bank and VP Tom Connor, a long-time PCT supporter.

- In late April, we installed five beautiful, interpretive signs along the trail. Made by a company in Illinois, these colorful signs educate trail visitors about Mt. Tom, bluebirds, invasive plants, the rain garden and pollinators.

- Earlier this spring we completed the small connector to the Brickyard Brook Trail

This July, we are undertaking a real stewardship challenge at Mutter's Field. We have contracted with a company that works with conservation organizations to eradicate invasive plants on their land. Our property is being overtaken with two viney plants that if left unattended would make the trail impassable within a year - black swallowwort and bittersweet. At present, the meadow inside the loop trail is filled with these plus poison ivy. Not exactly user friendly plants.

We considered all the options and concluded that spraying was the only way to control these plants. So, for a time this summer, the meadow will look quite brown. The herbicide that will be carefully applied, kills broad-leafed plants but not grasses. Our goal, over time, is to restore the meadow and surrounding areas to the plant community that would exist absent the invaders. Realistically, we know that this will be an ongoing effort. Seeds persist in the ground for many years and new ones float in every year. But, as stewards, we feel obliged to encourage ecological diversity on our lands and this is one of the ways we are doing that.





At the Lathrop Community in early July, I am presenting a slideshow, followed by a tour of the accessible trail. I am offering a tour for Williston Library patrons the following week. I'm open to giving programs/tours for other groups, in my shameless, ongoing efforts to promote this wonderful property. Feel free to make suggestions for future tours. I also post regularly on Facebook and receive many positive responses from the local community.

From the time the loop trail was laid down in the fall of 2015, people have been enjoying the trail. Parents with strollers, walkers of all ages, both able and disabled, nature watchers, exercise walkers, are among the daily visitors. I often chat with people when I'm there and I can report, without hesitation, that the reviews are 100% positive. People love this place! Have you visited yet? Spread the word.

Oh...almost forgot. We still need your support! Maintaining this property is costly but necessary. We welcome donations of money and/or volunteers to help with the maintenance here. Contact Molly Goodwin to volunteer. And, if you visit the trail this summer and it hasn't rained much, bring a jug of water with you and water the butterfly gardens so the plants can make it through their first year in good shape. Thanks for all your support!

*Marty Klein*



# Pomeroy Meadows and the Beckley Trail

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It's going to be a warm one today, April 11, 2017, but the warmth is welcomed and rather tempered inside these friendly woods on Pascomuck Conservation Trust land with its beckoning Beckley Trail. As I lope along, my soul replenishes with vitality, energy, and hope!

It's a good day for all types of walkers/hikers; the path is springy to the step, dry in most places, maybe slightly damp in the shadows. Tiny twigs, dead oak leaves and fragrant pine needles cushion my walk as I welcome the sunlight on my shoulders and breathe in the fragrance of the woods. Squirrels scamper in the ravine to my left; birds chirp their love calls all around me.

As it is early spring, there's wide visibility; peering through the forest I notice green and brown saplings lying low, flattened by the winter's freeze. A squirrel scampers, a chipmunk pokes around; other creatures keep hidden from view.



The trail is clear and plenty wide thus lessening any trepidation that the deer ticks carrying lime disease might hop off a shrub and hop onto me. Thinking ahead, it was easy to don my "uniform" for this trail walk as a practical and precautionary measure: a pair of comfortable, breathable walking shoes, light cotton socks tucked over summer weight denims, a silk T-shirt covered by a long sleeved safari shirt (any light cotton long-sleeved shirt would do, of course), a summer scarf wrapped around my neck, and finally on my head a visor cap. My jeans, socks, shoes and hat have all been sprayed with family-friendly OFF! containing 7% DEET That should do the trick! Later I'll set that outfit aside and use it only for future walks in the woods.

I take delight in the sound of my own crunching footsteps and the movement of my own limbs as I descend the gradual slope. The narrower sections of the trail today, as it descends to the field or ascends to the hilltop, are dry, firm, and people-friendly. The mowed strip of land above and below the gas pipeline post offers pleasant views.



Eight inches tall and growing, two chartreuse/Kelly green skunk cabbages catch my eye from the banks of a glistening, winding brook as I stand on this cleverly constructed split-tree-trunk footbridge.

There's very little wind - a good day for learning how to fly the small plane I hear above me. Even the noisy 104th fighter wings out of Westfield's Barnes Air National Guard Base are not on maneuvers as of this morning- sparing my eardrums and the wildlife that surrounds me.

I walk at a good stride straight to the trail's end, deciding to take the spur trails on my way back. I reach the Manhan Landing and glance in silent wonder as the Manhan River rounds the bend. There's a steady flowing current, and here and there an eddy twirls, and the river hums

a peaceful bubbling sound as it skirts around branches and fallen trees.

Red leafed buds are now visible on many trees, and tiny green points protrude on the invasive rambling and twisting wild rose vines. Bittersweet, another invasive vine, has yet to burst forth in leaves and orange berries.

I proceed back up the trail, passing murky vernal pools newly formed from melt-water. A persistent woodpecker hammers away above me. Birds chirp, staking out their territories, building their nests.

Now and then I remove a few twigs or small pine boughs from the trail; I step over and around some tree roots. I gaze in awe at a huge tree trunk with a hole pecked out in perfect roundness, and I guess at what spring-time treasure it could hold.

Standing on the River Bend Overlook reached by the short spur trail, I peer out onto another turn of the Manhan; I know that the giant beech tree that sits on that elbow of land will display in due time all its glories with the approaching seasons. The water ripples—so relaxing, almost hypnotic.

I reluctantly head back up the trail, around the bend and down the incline. I step onto a little bridge over a small brook. It glistens as it trickles and meanders down and back to the river, and I can see my shadow reflected in the surface with the sun above and behind me as I steal a glance into the small ravine that contains it.

I reach Pomeroy Meadow with its new spring green grass reaching only 4 or 5 inches high; I reflect on how in a few months the milkweed will attract the Monarchs and perhaps that shy red fox I spotted a few years ago will return. What a peaceful view of a pretty meadow.

A security helicopter whirs above.

I ramble up the path sweetly scented under the tall red pines with their trunks that stand like sentinels.

At the fork I choose the longish Spur trail with the yellow blaze, that descends to Frog Pond Overlook where peepers chirp and bull frogs bellow contentedly in this somewhat large pond that is now well-filled with water from melted snow and early spring rains.

I hike back to the Beckley with its white blaze and eventually reach the intersection. To my left is the inviting wooden stairway that leads to Ranch Avenue and Paul Street. I decide to turn right, toward my home in the Hampton Condo's, feeling energized from the mile-long hike and grateful that I live so nearby this gem of a walking trail that winds through the Pomeroy Meadow conservation area.

*Andrea Tovar*



# 2017 Edward Dwyer Award Recipient

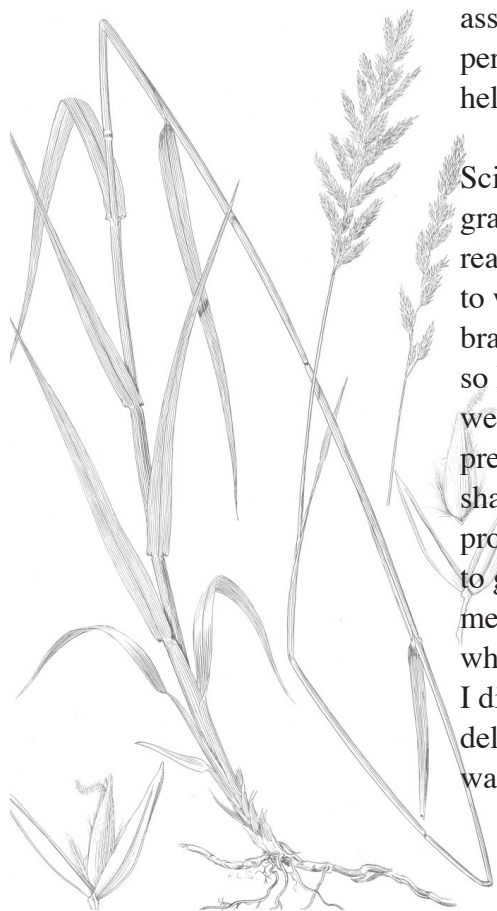
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## Hannah Miller, Class of 2017

I have always loved working with children and helping them learn. For over a year I worked as a teacher's assistant with children in varying ages from three to ten. In addition I worked at a summer camp with kids in varying ages from seven to thirteen some of whom had disabilities. To reach my goal of becoming a middle school science teacher, I will attend The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth for five years and obtain a Master's in Education with a minor in Biology. I am extremely clear and excited about my future and believe that with your support I can be one step closer to fulfilling my dreams.

My passion for teaching surfaced my first semester of my senior year when I had the opportunity to intern in the science department. It was taking many things I loved and wrapping it into one. It was different from my other experiences working with kids, as I was working with my peers, however, it still afforded me the opportunity to offer my assistance with questions. In addition, I was able to develop a new perspective on grading, creating lesson plans and insights on how to help kids succeed.

Science has always been a passion of mine. When I entered eighth grade, we were able to participate in the school's science fair. Within reason we could research and study anything we wanted. I chose to work with mealworms. I created four different habitats: gravel, branches and leaves, dirt and cut grass. I wanted an added variable so I also tested these habitats both in the light and dark. I spent many weeks working with the mealworms, observing which habitat they preferred. Pages of notes were turned into data which I was able to share with my class. With all my hard work and dedication to this project I received an honorable mention, which made me eligible to go to the regional science fair. For the next month I observed the mealworms and gathered data for regionals. I earned third place which qualified me to continue on to the statewide competition. While I didn't place at states it was an incredible experience and I was delighted to meet other kids who loved science and share a project I was passionate about with so many people.





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The following year when I entered high school, I continued to foster my love for science. I enrolled in as many science classes as I could, everything from earth science to chemistry. During my junior year, I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica and spend a few days working on a turtle reservation. I spent two nights walking up and down the beach in Puerto Limon, looking for Leatherback Sea Turtles. The purpose of these outings were to find females who had come up from the ocean to lay eggs. The goal was to gather eggs and bring them to the hatchery where they were kept safe from poachers and predators. When we eventually came across a female, we set to work. Some of my group helped dig a hole while others attached a bag to her back in order to collect eggs. The guides who were with us took measurements and tagged the turtle in order to track when she would surface next. When the turtle was finished laying eggs, we detached the bag, helped her fill in the hole with sand and watched as she crawled back to the ocean. This was an absolutely amazing experience which I would love to have again and be able to share with others who appreciate nature the way I do. It was totally breathtaking.

I hope, with the help of your scholarship, I am able to combine my passion for helping kids learn with my goal of becoming a middle school science teacher.



*recognition*

## *Forever Grateful to Our Volunteers!!!*

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PCT has wonderful volunteers and the numbers keep growing! We literally could not do it without you! There are 15 of us on the Board of various ages and abilities, some retired and some working full time. We have over 9 properties that require anywhere from minimal to extensive upkeep and there's no way just the 15 of us could do it alone even though John tries with all of his might! This is where the importance of our volunteers comes in! We have several such as Ed Procon, Don McQuillan, Peter Brooks, Bobbe O'Brien, Lillian Alvarez, Christine Yarrion, Kirk Peterson, Dana Salisbury, Joel Walz, Bob Smith, and Kevin Mulligan who have been with us for years and continue to be invaluable. Gerrit Stover probably deserves his own article here given all that he does for PCT, from sign making to guiding us in a myriad of matters vital to our functioning. Sue Bishop always helps with the fabulous and creative raffle items as does Terry Perrea, with her raffle theme baskets at the plant sale, and Leslie Harrington has donated countless plants over the years and is the mastermind behind and donator of the plants in the butterfly gardens at Mutter Field. Beverly Wodicka continues to be the driving force behind putting the newsletter together in such a professional style. Rebecca Belofsky is a newer volunteer who has been so supportive with trail maintenance and plant preparation for the plant sales. Lesley Milligan has also helped with potting and tending the plant sale.

We started a new process this year of asking folks to make a short or longer term commitment to specific tasks at a particular property and this has been extremely helpful. Kathleen Nash has been a star with all of her work at Brickyard Brook and Warren Wilkinson is making a valiant effort to weed whack at Mutter Field. Jen Taft has been helpful with Old Pascommuck and Sage McKnight and Marylou Splain have helped out at various sites plus Marylou often offers valuable insights at the board meetings. We've created a group of people who are interested in supporting Pomeroy Meadow including George Brehm, Elizabeth Pinard, Patti Gambarini, Tom Quinn, Albert Tencate and Andrea Tovar. Their efforts got the two viewing platforms stained and they monitor for fallen trees or potential interlopers. Their love of the property and commitment to maintaining it really warms my heart. Jamie Paquette is a new volunteer who just reached out on his own to help out and has already been tremendously helpful.

We are always looking for new volunteers so please contact me at goodmol@hotmail.com if you'd like to help out in any way even if it's just a small or short term task. It's really true that many hands make the work easier and faster!! All of my interactions with the PCT board members and volunteers are always rewarding and pleasurable and any effort to preserve our beautiful town and the natural areas just feels good. So join us! On behalf of the PCT Board, I extend a deep sense of gratitude to all of our volunteers!!

*Molly Goodwin*

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*Annual Membership Drive 2017*

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PLEASE INDICATE VOLUNTEER INTERESTS

- Donate plants for plant sale \_\_\_\_\_  
Prepare plants for plant sale \_\_\_\_\_  
Donate prizes for raffles \_\_\_\_\_  
Setup/take down at plant sale \_\_\_\_\_  
Monitor a Trust area near me \_\_\_\_\_  
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Pascommuck Conservation Trust  
P.O. Box 806  
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THANK YOU!

Pascommuck is a 501 (3) (C) non-profit charitable organization. Your gift is tax deductible.





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