



# Pascommuck post

Summer 2025

## *Dear Friends of the Pascommuck Conservation Trust:*

The PCT is once again actively engaged with many projects! Land acquisition, stomping out those invasives, clearing fallen trees from trails both large and small, installing benches at our properties – the list can go on.....and on.

First, we'd like to thank you, our dedicated conservation members, your support, whether it is in the form of trail maintenance, property monitoring, joining us on a guided walk or financial support, you are invaluable to the mission of the PCT. We are all pretty proud of what we are able to accomplish as an all-volunteer organization and it could not be done without you!

Along with the two – both 10 acre - properties we protected last year we are in the process of conserving two more properties!! Fingers crossed, if successful we will add approximately 70 acres to conserved parcels in Easthampton. There will be more to come on this exciting project.

Our involvement in preserving a 30+ acre farm was a task that united 4 different organizations. You'll be happy to drive by and know the owners and other entities worked hard to save this landmark in perpetuity - at the base of Mt. Tom.

The Board and others are in the process of establishing an invasive program that will address two of our properties this fall and two others - we hope - in the near future. Once the invasives are under control we will be able to increase native and pollinator plants. More to come on this very exciting project!

The PCT is also working on the maintenance and repair of our trail systems. We have an urgent need to replace a bridge at Mutter Field – water flow has pecked away at the banks of the existing bridge area, this is a work in process. The spring water flow along streams



# Trail Maintenance

and rivers on our properties has altered a few of our trails. It's always impressive to see nature change where you locate a trail or bench! One of our benches has somehow come closer to the Manhan River.

We have a few memorial bench sites available to honor a loved one or to dedicate a bench to a cause/company or individual. You can visit our website for more information, we'd be happy to talk to you!

If you'd like to join a work party, make a donation, purchase a bench, ask a question, send a suggestion, get involved - please go to [PCTLand.org](http://PCTLand.org) we would love to hear from you.

We want to thank you for your continued support of the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, where the wild thing are.

*Dianne McLane, President*



# History of Old Pascommuck Conservation Area

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The trust's Old Pascommuck Conservation Area ( Pascommuck translates to “Where the river bends”), our first acquisition, has an interesting story line, not to mention its unique location near the foothills of Mt Tom on East Street, the Manhan Rail Trail, and close to the confluence of the Manhan and Connecticut Rivers. And incidentally, this is where I first came into contact with some of its founding members, who quickly persuaded me to join the fledgling organization. Little did I know what I was getting into here...

The forested area here is classified as “Core Habitat” (a critical wildlife and plant habitat). Thanks to a generous donation by a local family, a 10.5 acre stretch was recently added along the Manhan River where it eventually conflues with the waters of the Connecticut River's Oxbow section. Commonly known as the “Old Bed”, this unusual bend was formed during a flood in 1845, when the Connecticut River changed its course, thus cutting off this oxbow-shaped portion. Incidentally, this “Old Bed “scenario was immortalized in Thomas Cole's dramatic painting, *“The Oxbow”*.

A new loop off the Manhan Rail Trail has been added, leading to the Stella Wiernasz Memorial Lookout, where a new bench has been installed in her memory.

Some notable plants in this area include American Linden (basswood ), rare sedges, bladdernut shrub, buttonball bush, and large sycamore trees. A bridge crossing the Manhan river once was located near a huge sycamore that still stands along its shoreline. In fact, I have a replica of an old photo depicting the bridge, which I consider to be one of my cherished possessions. The next time you drive by Old Pascommuck, I hope you'll take a moment to realize its special historical significance and ecological features, and maybe take a hike there as well. It's good for the heart and soul.

*John Bator*

# Conserving the Manhan's Wilds

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Some years ago, PCT Director Marty Klein placed a few wildlife cameras at various Trust properties, mainly to see what critters might be using the areas along the Manhan River. Disappointingly, at least two cameras were stolen (torn by a thief from its protective metal case high on a tree), but among the most remarkable results was a series of images of a bobcat, taken in winter near the river overlook platform at Pomeroy Meadows. Over a period of days, the camera recorded the bobcat making its daily rounds on the frozen river, eastward in one photo and then westward hours later, its tracks accumulating with each passage through the snow.

It's one thing to know, intellectually, that PCT's properties provide habitat for a wide array of wildlife; it's another to see proof that Pomeroy Meadows was part of this elusive predator's home range, a sign of a reasonably well-functioning ecosystem. All animals need space to live their lives, and a population of bobcats needs more than most. This is one reason why PCT devotes much of its attention and energy toward protecting land along the Manhan—building a conservation portfolio that can support bobcats also helps basically everything else.

The Manhan River and its tributaries have been defining features of the Easthampton area for centuries, shaping its social, economic, and ecological histories, central in the community and sense of place. Reflecting this

centrality, many of PCT's holdings are strung like jewels along the Manhan necklace, including Old Pascommuck near the Oxbow, Old Trolley Line by Lovefield St., Dwyer off Terrace View, and Pomeroy Meadows by Glendale St. All publicly accessible with maintained trails, these conservation areas showcase many aspects of the Manhan River floodplain. These include:

*Opportunities to observe the effects of seasonal flooding* – Mainly in spring, but, with increasing frequency at other times of year as well, the Manhan rises above its banks and spills into the surrounding fields and forests. Carrying trees and other flood debris, and depositing fresh sediment, these floods are an important part of what makes these places special.

*Oxbow wetlands/pools* – Meander channels cut off from the current river course are scattered across various sections of floodplain. These areas retain water and frequently act as vernal pools, providing breeding habitat for wood frogs and spotted salamanders, American toads, and other amphibians.





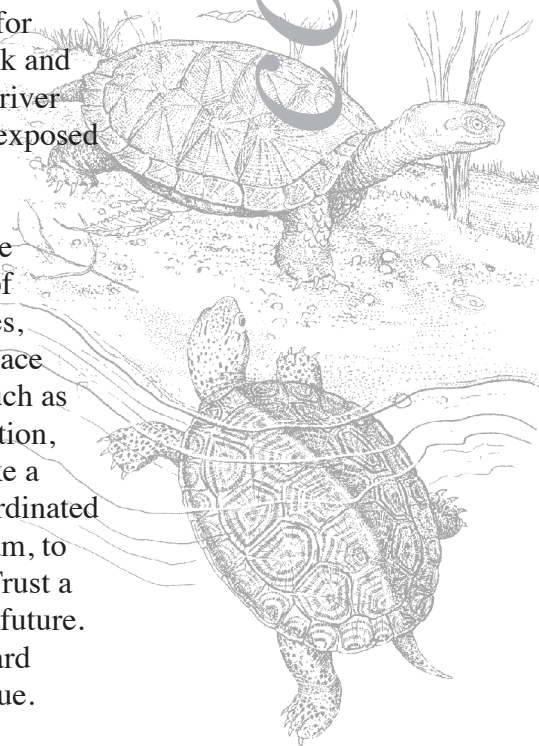
*Spring ephemeral wildflowers* – Nutrient enrichment from floods feeds an explosion of herbaceous plants that flower before the canopy trees are fully leafed out, including bloodroot, wild oats, trout lily, red trillium, and others. Overall botanical diversity on floodplains is high, with several unusual sedges and other plants making their homes there. Just watch out for poison ivy!

*Interesting wildlife habitat* – Cavity trees near the river provide nest sites for wood ducks and mergansers, flying squirrels, owls, and other critters. Mink and otter forage along the banks or in the channel; beavers build lodges in the river banks, and kingfishers and bank swallows excavate nest holes in suitably exposed sandy banks. There's always something going on by the river.

One challenge common to floodplains is that regular disturbances, land use history, and relatively high nutrient availability contribute to a profusion of invasive plants, including itadori knotweed, shrub honeysuckles, barberries, and round-leaved bittersweet. These and other invasive plant species displace the native plant community and disrupt important ecosystem processes, such as forest succession and carbon sequestration. PCT's properties are no exception, yet as an all-volunteer land trust, it has been beyond Trust capacity to make a serious strategic improvement in this problem. Recently, Marty Klein coordinated with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), a federal program, to develop a conservation plan for two PCT properties. NRCS awarded the Trust a \$100,000 cost-share grant, with the potential for additional funding in the future. PCT will be working to implement grant activities, an important step toward reducing the threat that invasive plants pose to the land's conservation value.

*Tom Lautzenheiser*

conservation



# Some Ways to Appreciate Nature on our Properties

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For years, people have told me I have a “great eye” for nature. (Actually, I have two!) I take that to mean I am a keen observer and documentarian of the natural world. Over the years, whether I am foraging or aimlessly walking, I have strived to really see what’s around me, as opposed to merely looking. When you walk on a trail, do you see shades of green or do you notice individual plants and other natural features? Is your goal to go from Point A to Point B or to allow nature to reveal its wonders? Here are a few suggestions to enhance your experience.

To help you focus, put your phone in your pocket or set it to quiet mode and only use it to take photos. Texting and looking at notifications can wait and only serve as distractions on your walk.



Slow down and sit quietly for 5 or 10 minutes. Your senses will awaken. The odds of seeing critters, large and small will increase as you blend into the landscape. If you dare, shut your eyes for a minute to sharpen your other senses.

It’s ok if you can’t identify everything you observe. Attaching a name to your observations can be useful but shouldn’t be the measure of your experience. Being in nature is an opportunity to appreciate marvelous things you may not have noticed in the past.

Turn over a log and see what’s going on there. You might see invertebrates like centipedes, pill bugs, slugs, ants and others. You might discover the largely unseen networks of fungal mycelia, masses of white threads seeking food and connections. Sometimes, you may

be lucky enough to find a sheltering snake or a salamander. Be sure and return the log to its original position when you’re done.

Use your eyes like a camera with a zoom and a macro lens. As you scan your surroundings, observe the sky and the trees in the distance and the various lifeforms on the ground at your feet.

Smell the flowers. A few, like trilliums and skunk cabbage are yucky, while others like spring beauties, autumn olives, crabapples and wild roses are delightful. You might also observe the many of types of pollinators that are attracted to those flowers.

Of course, I have to mention mushrooms, those often unappreciated organisms that are seemingly everywhere when you choose to observe them. Their colors span the spectrum and their forms and sizes are diverse. Some grow on the ground while others grow on wood. Some smell like well, mushrooms, while others smell of maple or shrimp or curry or even fish. Some are small and delicate, while others are as hard as the wood they grow on.

*Lastly, leave your expectations behind when you walk. Be open to possibilities and surprises.*

Spending time in nature offers many benefits to our wellbeing. We get it and we protect important land and natural resources here for your enjoyment. Maybe on your next walk, you will be surprised to discover something whose memory will remain for you for years to come. There is no fake news in nature, my friends.

*Marty Klein*



# New Board Members!

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## **Myssie Casinhino**

Myssie has been a regular visitor and admirer of PCT protected lands throughout their 20 years living in Easthampton. After settling into a new home near a PCT property, they uncovered a surprising passion for birdwatching and a commitment to land conservation. Joining the board felt like a natural extension of this connection. Myssie brings extensive experience serving on nonprofit boards, along with organizational and bookkeeping skills. They're excited to contribute to PCT's mission of protecting vital lands and natural resources for public benefit.

When not working or volunteering, Myssie can be found in the woods trying to befriend the crows or following the calls of whippoorwills after dark.

## **Eric Rose**

Eric is a relatively recent transplant from rural upstate New York. He moved to Easthampton while attending the Conway School of Landscape Design. He has joined PCT with intentions to become better connected to the surrounding landscape and community, learn the ins-and-outs of land conservation, and help guide Easthampton toward an ecologically sound future.



# Pascommuck Conservation Trust Scholarship Award

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This Award was founded in memory of Edward Dwyer a longtime member and Treasurer of the Board and author of a definitive history of the Town of Easthampton.

Each year we support a graduate from Easthampton whose interest is conservation and the environment. We are happy to support **Lidie Buttrick** this year -

*I have been attending Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative for 4 years, in the Landscape and Horticulture field. I have done a co-op at Springfield Water and Sewer Watershed. All the knowledge that was gifted to me, I will use when I attend UMass Amherst, where I will major in Applied Plant and Soil Sciences.*

We wish her the best in making a difference in the world.



recognition

# Fundraising

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## What's Next for PCT's Fundraising? We are Open to Your Ideas.

PCT has been known for its Spring and Fall Plant Sales for decades. It was a labor of love, a popular community event and our primary focus of fundraising but, as mentioned, the jumping worms and a desire to be cautious, brought that to an end. We had the successful Founders Estate Sale last fall and another Tag Sale at John Bator Park this May.

Membership, donations, grants and fundraising are our only sources of financial support for our property's acquisitions and maintenance. We are working on increasing our membership recruitment efforts and public awareness but we are at a bit of a loss as to our next step for fundraising. We are open to ideas! If you have any new thoughts, fundraising skills or an interest in starting a new project with PCT, please let us know.

## Pascommuck Conservation Trust Board

### *Officers*

Dianne McLane, *President*  
John Bator, *Vice President*  
Rachel Telushkin *Treasurer*  
MaryLou Dodge, *Clerk*

### *Board Members*

Fred Andresen  
William Burgart  
Michael Caron  
Myssie Casinhino  
Alan Clark  
Molly Goodwin  
Brianna Grant  
Katie Hereld  
Martin Klein  
Tom Lautzenheiser  
Eric Rose  
Scott Tunderman  
Susanna Walz

### *Coordinator of Volunteers*

Molly Goodwin

### *Land Preservation Consultant*

Gerrit Stover

### *Database Manager*

Rachel Telushkin

### *Newsletter Design & Layout*

Beverly Wodicka

### *Webmaster*

Michael Caron  
[pctland.org](http://pctland.org)



# PASCOMMUCK CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2025

### PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

- Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Street \_\_\_\_\_
- Town/City \_\_\_\_\_
- State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Email \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE CHECK YOUR DESIRED MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter (\$10)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$75)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$15)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (\$100) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$25)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Steward (\$100)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor (\$50)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor (\$150)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member (\$1000) | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift (\$10)       |

### MAKE AN ADDITIONAL DONATION FOR:

Unrestricted \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Land Conservation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory/Honor of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE INDICATE VOLUNTEER INTERESTS

- ☐ Donate plants for plant sale
- ☐ Prepare plants for plant sale
- ☐ Setup/take down at plant sale
- ☐ Monitor a Trust area near me
- ☐ Grant Writing /Fundraising
- ☐ Land Conservation  
(Landowner contacts, Planning, etc.)
- ☐ Trail/Property Maintenance
- ☐ Publicity/Media



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

*Preserving our past . . .  
protecting our future*

**THANK YOU!**

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MAIL THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

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

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



**Pascommuck Conservation Trust**

P.O. Box 806

Easthampton, MA 01027

*pctland.org*

*Return Service Requested*

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*Marty Klein*