



Pascommuck post

Fall 2026

Raptors Attend Our Annual Meeting

We celebrated 44 years as Easthampton's land trust at our Annual Meeting on May 16 with the help of about 40 loyal followers, 11 board members and the fabulous Tom Ricardi and his amazing raptors.

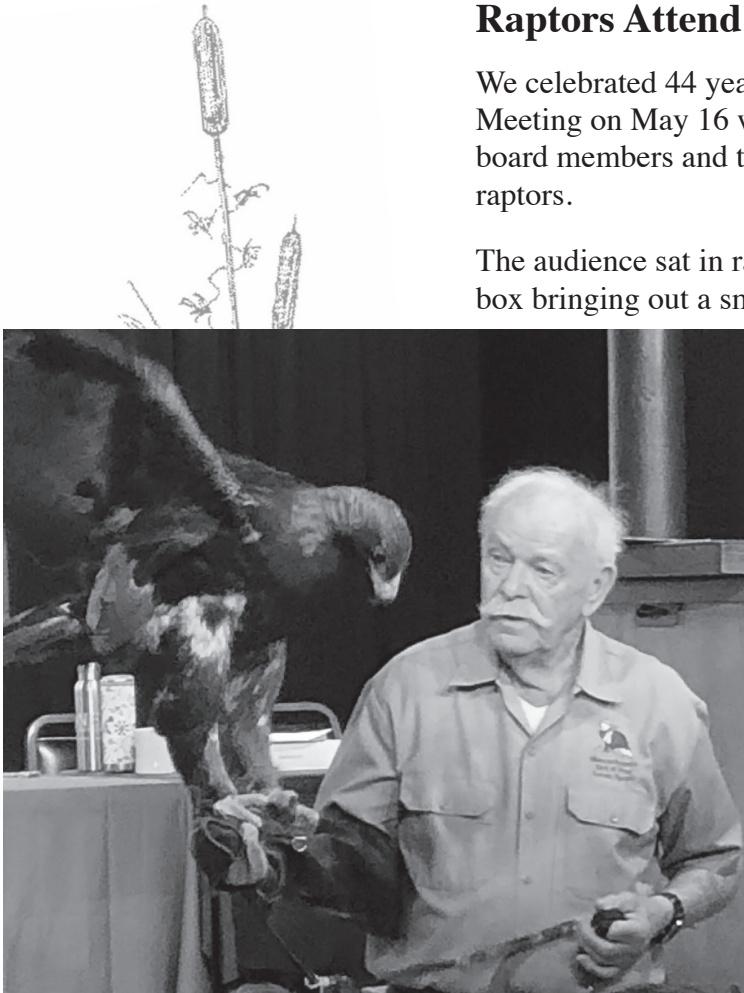
The audience sat in rapt (ha ha!) attention as Tom went from box to box bringing out a small and adorable saw-whet owl, an inquisitive

barred owl, a large young golden eagle, a beautiful peregrine falcon, a massive black vulture that nuzzled Tom's neck and a majestic young red-tailed hawk. Tom described the characteristics of these birds of prey, some of the threats to them, what we can do to prevent these, how they came to him and how he cares for them. He also mentioned MA bill (H.5217 and S.2721) to ban rodenticides that are causing many raptor deaths. Please contact your legislature to ask for support of this bill. Tom's devotion was inspiring and heart-warming.

The annual meeting was an opportunity for the public to hear what we've been doing. Our president, Dianne McLane, outlined our past year accomplishments and future

goals. She spoke of the new 40 acres we've acquired from the Brehm family. Its rich wetlands and woods along the Manhan River extend our existing Pomeroy Meadow property. It connects with land protected by Kestrel and Southampton to create 150 acres of wildlife corridor. She thanked George's family and pointed out George's framed photos of the land and wildlife. We thank the Big Red Frame for framing and for its significant donation of time and materials.

PCT, in collaboration with Kestrel and DCR, is working to protect



a farm on East Street. Dianne spoke of the ongoing efforts at invasive eradication on PCT properties, especially Mutter Field, Brickyard Brook and Edward J. Dwyer. This is the 10th anniversary of Mutter Field, where extensive infrastructure work is slated. Dianne thanked Kevin Mulligan who continues to be a huge help with maintenance projects despite “turning over his chainsaw” to Marin Goldstein.



To support students interested in conservation and to honor our stalwart Sue Walz, we continue with our Ed Dwyer scholarship at the high school and have added another scholarship. We are having two ice cream socials in May and October as a thank you to the community. We also have fundraising raffles at these events. We remain involved in the Easthampton Land Protection Collaborative and support the wetlands ordinance in Easthampton along with other conservation efforts. We will have two yearly newsletters and host tables at the farmers’ markets and elsewhere. Not bad for an all-volunteer group. We are busy!

John Bator, former long-term president, and Mike Tautznik, a founding PCT member, gave a heartfelt tribute for Bob Pinkos, also a founding member. They highlighted the dedication and love Bob had for Easthampton and its natural resources. They wanted to reinspire PCT to preserve open space in “our little jewel of a city.” Mike talked about the original nine founders who were all involved in city government but wanted to find a better way to get things done. So they created PCT.

There have been several changes to the board in the last year. We re-elected those with expiring terms: Dianne McLane, Bill Burgart, Michael Caron, Katie Hereld and Marty Klein. We formally elected Helen Clement and Myssie Casinghino as very welcome new members. Fred Andresen and our former treasurer, Rachel Telushkin, resigned to pursue other interests and will be missed. Marylou Dodge has stepped down as clerk to put her energies in fundraising and outreach. Thankfully, our new clerk, Myssie, is also helping with the treasury duties in the interim. The treasurer and clerk reports for the last year were read and approved.

The PCT board is already working hard on the goals Dianne laid out and on finding another riveting speaker for 2027. We hope to see you all there!

Molly Goodwin

Note: You can view Easthampton Media’s videotape of the meeting at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPAR2RnCtEO>

Storytelling—It's not Just for Kids

Come and experience live storytelling on Sunday, October 4 at John Bator Park at 11 am. Bring yourself, friends, kids, grandkids and chairs. The stories will be suitable for all ages. Be prepared to be taken to other lands and learn how other cultures think about the natural world. Have you ever been so completely caught up in an incident a friend told you about that the rest of the world fell away? Have you ever listened to “The Moth” radio program but had to stop what you were doing because you wanted to hear what the speaker had to say next? If so, then you have experienced the power of storytelling.

And if you think that oral storytelling—without a script or book—is something new, guess again. Dating back over 40,000 years, storytelling is the oldest method of sharing information. People of all ages would gather around fires to learn their history, genealogy, values, laws, strategies for living and ways to make sense of the world. The one who knew these stories held an honored place in their community. People used spoken word, rhythm, music, art and ritual to aid in the memory of ideas that were important to pass down to future generations. West Africa has their Griots to recount history, Indigenous Australia has dreamtime and creation stories of ecological and spiritual landscapes, Native and Indigenous Nations have trickster tales and migration histories. All this to encode scientific knowledge, social protocols and moral lessons.

Even in this age of electronic media with everything vying for our attention, storytelling still holds the power to transform thoughts, hold focus and transmit values. Folk tales have been around in every country since people could first communicate with one another. They often feature ordinary characters doing extraordinary things. Best of all, though they change slightly with each telling, they maintain the core ideas. The stories that have survived through the ages have done so because the concepts behind them are universal and address our humanity. Did you know that every culture has a variant of the Cinderella story? Even the ancient Greeks had a Cinderella story of a maiden bathing when a bird stole her sandal and flew far to drop it in the lap of a king.

Katie Hereld

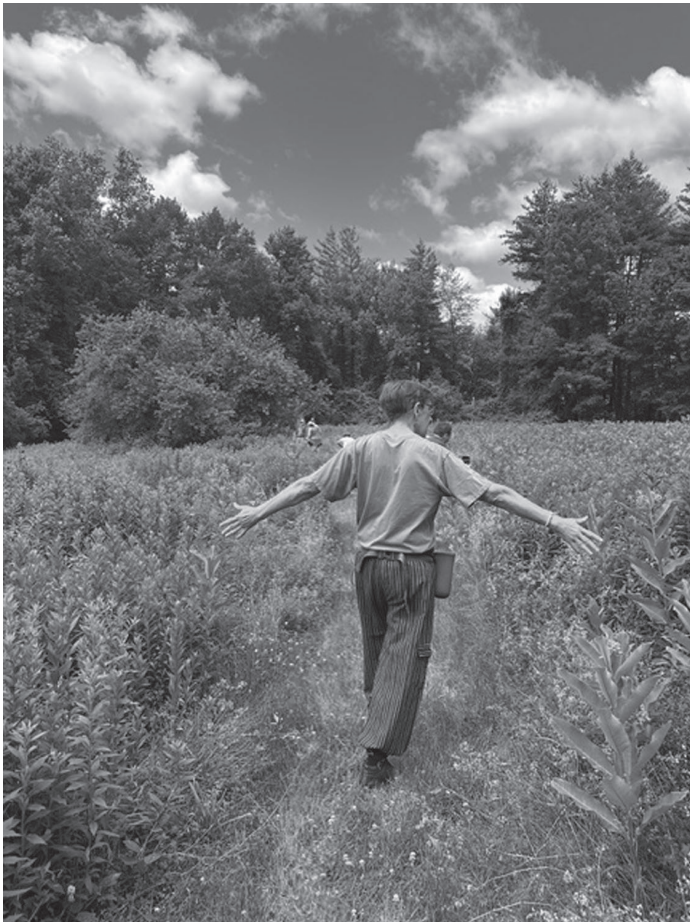
“Katie Hereld is a master storyteller. She creates spell-binding effect and captivates audiences of all ages.” Rabbi Dr. Jeremiah Unterman, formerly an Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford



tradition

A Beautiful Walk

PCT has been making a successful effort to get folks out into nature this spring and summer. Our June walk was at the Pomeroy Meadow Conservation Area off Ranch Avenue and was led by Roger Anderson and Molly Goodwin. We live nearby and have enjoyed it for many



years, becoming familiar with the various aspects of the trail. We were thrilled to share it with other people. We had a good showing with nearly 20 people. We were supported in our exploration of the plants, trees and land formations by Tom Lautzenheiser who is a long-time PCT board member and is also a senior conservation ecologist with Mass Audubon.

We spent some time discussing the history of the acquisition which occurred from 2010 to 2012 and the pleasure of preserving many large white pines which were marked for logging. We explained the term “dingles” which are small, deep and narrow wooded valleys or dells and a common land formation in this area due to water erosion in the sedimentary soil left behind by glacial Lake Hitchcock. There were some stately hemlocks and oaks, some of which seemed to defy gravity as they grew on the sides of the dingles.

Another point of interest was the exploration of the different birch trees on the site including white, yellow and black. Roger told the story he has previously learned from Tom about how yellow birches drop their seeds in the winter. The seeds are specifically designed to glide across the snow to spread farther. When the snow melts, the ones that land on fertile areas such as disturbed earth or rotting logs begin to grow into new birch trees. We saw many examples of these young trees on the walk.

Everyone enjoyed the platform which looks out over the frog pond and another that looks out over a bend in the Manhan River. This bend is actively changing and demonstrates the formation of an oxbow which is really something to witness. We ambled through the large meadow full of common June wildflowers which Tom identified. We shared sightings of bears, deer, otters, nuthatches, chickadees, scarlet tanagers, warblers, veery, wood thrushes, ovenbirds, orioles, hawks, cardinals, catbirds and vireos from our years of visits there.



We shared the excitement about the recent protected area expansion with the acquisition of the adjacent Brehm property. The trail is about two miles out and back with lots of heart-healthy opportunities including stairs and bench cuts. There are several tribute benches and chairs with lovely views for those who enjoy gazing at the beauty around them. We reconnected with some old friends, made new ones and welcomed some new members. The weather and bugs cooperated and it was a great day! Thanks to all who attended!

Roger Anderson and Molly Goodwin



Upcoming events

September 19th at 11 am: Old Trolley Line, led by Michael Caron and Tom Lautzenheiser

October 4th at 11am: Storytelling at John Bator Park, led by Katie Hereld

October 11th at 11am: Ice Cream Social at John Bator Park

October tbd, 11 am: Hannum Brook, led by Marty Klein and Eric Rose

Our Most Popular Trail Gets a Facelift

volunteers

Amazingly, 2026 marks the tenth anniversary of the opening of our Mutter's Field Accessible Trail! After having spent uncounted hours from 2012-2016 shepherding this project along, it is so gratifying for me to see that it has become PCT's most visited property. From its opening, this special place has been enjoyed daily by parents with strollers, those with disabilities, seekers of quiet time in nature, casual walkers and chipmunks of all stripes. Truly, "A Place in Nature for Everyone." Owing to time and the forces of nature, we have identified and addressed three areas in need of improvement here. So...

1. We originally constructed the trail above ground using pressure treated lumber along the sides to keep it in place. That wood only lasts about 10 years when in contact with the ground. Today, much of it is in various stages of rot. Kevin Mulligan and his crew will be replacing those boards with a composite lumber that has a 30 year lifespan and they will do some trail resurfacing as needed. We will also be adding more native plants along the ramp and in the fieldstone planters.



2. The culvert at the East Street end of the trail has been deteriorating for several years and is in danger of collapse. We will be removing it, allowing the brook to flow naturally. We are also installing a 30-foot aluminum bridge, spanning the brook area and linking the ramp to the loop in the field.



3. The Mt. Tom Avenue entrance to Brickyard Brook needs TLC also. Here, we are adding much needed improved signage near the trailhead. We are also installing a memorial bench overlooking Brickyard Brook and improving the steps across the brook. Furthermore, we will tackle some invasive plants and plant some natives.

I am optimistic that by the time you read this, the above will be a fait accompli/mission accomplished. Of course, all those improvements cost money. The total cost for the work is \$80,000. Yikes is right. In June, we received a generous \$44,000 grant under the Community Preservation Act (Note: without CPA support 10 years ago, we never would have been able to create Mutter's Field.) Thank you CPA!

We plan to take \$35,000 from PCT's coffers for the rest. However, you can help! If we get some volunteers from among you, it will count as an in-kind donation and will reduce our share. The need to protect what we can has never been greater. We face ongoing open space loss here as well as development pressures. We know how much you love Mutter's Field and Brickyard Brook. Your past support has enabled us to create and maintain these properties for everyone's benefit.

Marty Klein



Enticing Fireflies

Fireflies are magical: nature's own light show. Fairies in the night or the amazing bioluminescent creatures we share the world with. They are a wonder to behold. But you may have noticed that there are fewer than there used to be. Firefly numbers have been declining because they are losing habitat. Fortunately, you can help! If you have some space, you can share that space with fireflies. Here's how.

Fireflies being living creatures, require what all living things need: water, food, shelter and the conditions for procreation. The last one, for a firefly, means "darkness" as well as habitat.

What can you do to provide those things? Shelter, water and food are all interrelated, because fireflies spend the most of their lives underground in their larval form. They are fierce predators, and they prey on other insects. Those insects and the fireflies live in the soil and in rich humus provided by decaying wood and leaves.





Josie-Weiss

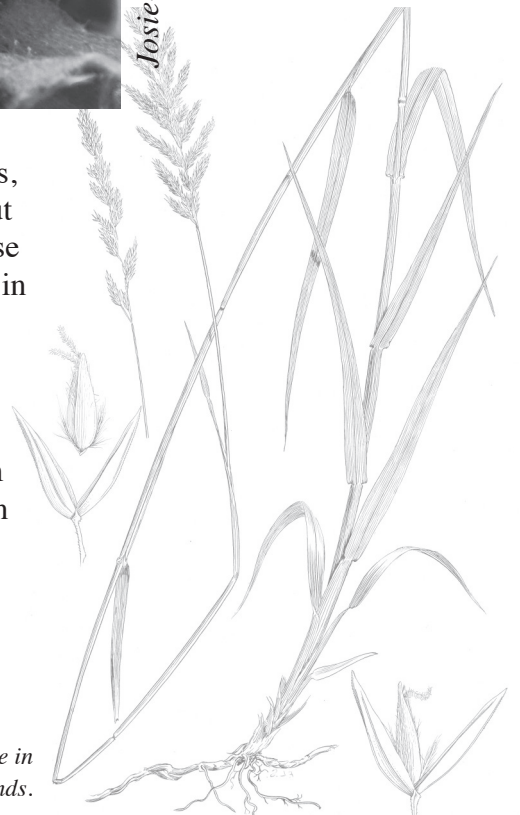
The fireflies and their prey are extremely susceptible to lawn chemicals, including fertilizers and especially mosquito treatments which wipe out fireflies. One of the best ways to help is to not treat your yard with these chemicals. Another way to help is to keep the leaves and rotting wood in your yard someplace. Fireflies do best when left alone.

The last bit, the darkness needed for procreation, is about how much light gets out at night. Make sure lights are on timers. If you can, tone down the color of your lights. Amber and red lights do much less harm than blue and white. Avoid flooding areas by pointing your lights down rather than up. Encourage the city and local businesses to do the same.

With these simple steps, we can keep the magic!

Sean Abbott

chair of the Biodiversity, Environmental and Ecological Sustainability (BEES) committee in town. We thank Sean for this article and for leading a June firefly walk for PCT and friends.



Public Recognizes PCT

PCT is recognized in the annual Readers' Choice Awards conducted by the Daily Hampshire Gazette. We are tied at number two with the Hilltown Land Trust. Kestrel was named number one. We are grateful for the recognition we have received.

Please hike one of our trails and spend time in the green heart of Easthampton.

Funding the Future

PCT has grown for over 40 years with the generous help from our members and contributors. This support has enabled us to acquire, hold and care for about 160 acres in our small city.

Now is the time we need to be even more financially ready to protect land that is vulnerable to development. Declining federal and state grants makes this a harder task. Nevertheless, PCT and others who prize our green open spaces believe that we can safely increase housing in the city while also protecting the forest, farms and waterways that make our town so special.

With this in mind, we have created a fundraising committee to explore new ways to raise funds. Our goal is to purchase and steward additional green spaces as they become available. Under the leadership of board member Katie Hereld, the group plans to reach out to new sources of dollars for the trust. With this work, we can continue to protect Easthampton's nature.

Marylou Dodge

How Can You Help?

Of the many ways you can help PCT thrive, here are some:

Tell a friend about our trails and activities

Volunteer your time and energy, such as providing in-kind work at Mutter Field

Become a PCT member and read our newsletters and emails

Meet board members at the Easthampton Sunday market and our ice cream socials

Donate a tribute bench on one of the trails

Buy our hats, bird houses and remarkable animal photos

Help us find a new treasurer

We are looking for a Treasurer

Do you want to have fun and join a dynamic organization? Maybe you want to spend time in nature, as well as help preserve green space in Easthampton for the benefit of wildlife and people.

The treasurer position is one of the most important positions for PCT.

Do you have Quickbook experience or would like to learn? You will be involved in an organization that is making a difference in Easthampton and surrounding areas. And, of course if you wish, you can join any of our public events like hikes, ice cream socials, nature talks etc. You are welcome to attend one of our monthly meetings to meet us.

Become part of an interesting, enjoyable and committed group of people!

For more information, contact our president Dianne McLane at PCTLand.org or dtmclane@charter.net.

Pascommuck Conservation Trust Board

Officers

Dianne McLane, *President*

John Bator, *Vice President*

TBD Treasurer

Myssie Casinho, *Clerk*

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Michael Caron

Myssie Casinhino

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Katie Hereld

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Susanna Walz

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Newsletter

Design & Layout

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Michael Caron

pctland.org



PASCOMMUCK CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2026

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

- Name_____
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- Email_____

PLEASE CHECK YOUR DESIRED MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- ☐ Contributor (\$35)
- ☐ Patron (\$75)
- ☐ Corporate (\$100)
- ☐ Sponsor(\$150)
- ☐ Life Member (\$1000)

MAKE AN ADDITIONAL DONATION



PLEASE INDICATE VOLUNTEER INTERESTS

- ☐ Volunteer as Treasurer
- ☐ Monitor a Trust area near me
- ☐ Grant Writing /Fundraising
- ☐ Land Conservation
(Landowner contacts, Planning, etc.)
- ☐ Trail/Property Maintenance
- ☐ Publicity/Media



THANK YOU!

MAIL THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

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

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Pascommuck Conservation Trust

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Marty Klein