

Views from Mount Grace

Volume 19, No. 1 • Spring 2008

C O N S E R V I N G T H E L O C A L L A N D S C A P E TM



Serving:

Ashburnham

Athol

Barre

Bernardston

Erving

Gardner

Gill

Greenfield

Hardwick

Hubbardston

Leyden

Montague

New Salem

Northfield

Orange

Petersham

Phillipston

Royalston

Templeton

Warwick

Wendell

Westminster

Winchendon

The Quabbin Corridor: Making Connections

BY DAVID KOTKER

From the top of Prospect Hill in Phillipston, the view of the landscape is largely of intact, unfragmented forest. This forest, based around the Quabbin's "accidental wilderness", includes both public and private lands owned by a diverse group of individuals and institutions. Within this natural panorama are 2,000 acres of land making up the Quabbin Corridor Connection, one of Mount Grace's current Forest Legacy Projects.

In Petersham, 687 of those acres were protected in the last week of 2007, consisting of land owned by the Day family and by David and Karen Davis. Both landowners donated CRs on their land, the Davises to Mount Grace, which will monitor the lands in perpetuity and the Days to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Both gifts are important advances for the Quabbin Corridor Connection's essential strategy: protecting corridors of forested land between the Quabbin Reservoir and the Popple Camp, Prince River, and Phillipston Wildlife Management Areas.

"Quabbin Corridor Connection introduced a new approach to the Forest Legacy Program," said Leigh Youngblood, who is managing the project for Mount Grace. "Instead of working with one big landowner, we are working with twenty neighbors, families who live on their land as part of the community."

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Dear Friends,

That partnerships make more conservation possible is a principle always at work at Mount Grace. Effective collaborations have clear goals that make finding common ground among different interests easy. The articles in this issue of *Views from Mount Grace* all illustrate the importance of partnerships and collaboration.

In 1999, Margaret Power-Biggs bequeathed Skyfields to Mount Grace, and left us funds to establish an endowment. Peggy, as she was known, wanted to conserve her beloved home place and to support the continuation of local conservation work that benefits everybody. The newly established Margaret Power-Biggs Society is one way for Mount Grace to acknowledge how important individual contributions are to the collective success of conservation in our region.

This spring and summer, the Coalition for the Environmental Bond is enlisting the help of as many Massachusetts individuals and organizations as possible in order to secure passage of this pending bill. Along with other important conservation-related programs, the bond bill underwrites the land acquisition budgets of the five state programs available to Mount Grace and local landowners to fund land conservation. Read inside for information on important, simple steps you can take to ensure its passage.

The thousands of acres being protected through the Quabbin Corridor Forest Legacy Project provide an excellent example of the realized potential of collaboration that I hope inspires and motivates you to participate more in Mount Grace's conservation efforts. It is the combined resources of individuals, private nonprofit land trusts, and public conservation agencies that together make conserving the local landscape possible. I urge you to be creative in thinking of ways that you can be personally involved.

Thank you for your support,

Leigh Youngblood
Executive Director

Views *from* Mount Grace

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

protects significant natural, agricultural and scenic areas and encourages land stewardship in North Central and Western Massachusetts for the benefit of the environment, the economy and future generations.

We welcome your articles, photographs, comments and suggestions. For information about becoming a member or to request a change of address, please contact our office at:

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Visit our web site at www.mountgrace.org

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Kasey Rolih	Warwick
Colleen Sculley	Montague
Jon Waidlich	Montague

By project's end, and including existing privately protected land like the Harvard Forest and the James W. Brooks Woodland reserve, the Quabbin Corridor Connection will create an interconnected network of 80,000 acres of protected habitat interlaced among the rural homes and farms of Petersham, Phillipston, Barre, and Southeast Athol.

The Day CRs are new additions to the project in every sense. The Day family originally planned the bargain sale of a CR on a smaller parcel of land around their home on the west side of Brown's Pond. While that sale is still pending, the family has donated two additional CRs on land north of the pond drained by two streams. One lot will be kept free from development for use as a woodlot, while the other will be managed for biodiversity under a forest management plan aimed at removing invasives and restoring native forest habitat.

The Davis CR, touching on the Swift River to the west and the Phillipston Wildlife Management Area to the east, protects a mosaic of forests, fields, and wetlands. Together, the Day and Davis gifts protect thousands of feet of river and stream frontage in the Swift River watershed, as well as active pastures, and working organic farmland. By agreeing to donate the CRs as gifts, the two families have helped leverage the Quabbin Corridor project as a whole, since each dollar of local support (including the value of CRs) brings a three-dollar match from the Forest Legacy program.

As the project moves forward the view from Prospect Hill is different with each season, but while snow replaces autumn leaves and spring brings its own changes, the panorama of the old New England landscape remains the same, the scene of a local heritage that continues to endure.

TWO STEPS FORWARD FOR NEW SALEM CONSERVATION

BY DAVID KOTKER

The continuing partnership between Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and conservation-minded land owners in New Salem moved forward again this winter. The last week of 2007 saw two projects in the New Salem portion of the Quabbin watershed close, one on 20 acres owned by David Drake, and the other involving 24 acres owned by Leonard and Nansi Glick. Both projects involved watershed protection restrictions (WPRs) which will be held by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The land protected is mostly wooded and is all within the Quabbin watershed. Most of the Glick property is surrounded by protected land. The woods are dominated by red oak and eastern hemlock, with various soft mast trees providing food and cover for wildlife species including a variety of birds like hermit thrush and pileated woodpeckers. The Drake land is already run according to a DCR approved forest management plan. Part of the land was cleared and will regenerate with young saplings, preferred habitat for shrubland birds like common yellowthroats and gray catbirds. The west of the property contains a forest of mature red and white oak.

Both projects are part of a larger land protection strategy agreed to by Mount Grace and the DCR. The Commonwealth agreed to purchase a conservation restriction (CR) on the



133-acre West Hill area of New Salem if local landowners would join in donating CRs or WPRs on an equivalent amount of land. The two families joined neighboring landowners, including Mount Grace and Josiah and Carol Ann Fisk, in putting together a bundle of donated conservation agreements that will protect over 240 acres around New Salem by the project's end. "It was the ready support from the community that made this project come together," said Mount Grace Project Manager Paul Daniello, "neighbors stepped forward with financial help, gifts of WPRs, and even volunteer events. That's what made it all happen."

Margaret Power-Biggs Society

In the twenty-two years Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust has existed, over one hundred individuals, businesses, organizations and foundations have contributed \$1,000 or more to Mount Grace in a single year. Collectively, this group comprises the Margaret Power-Biggs Society - providing resources and leadership for Mount Grace's work in the past, present, and future. We recognize the following members of the Margaret Power-Biggs Society for their dedication to conservation and Mount Grace.

Anonymous (11)

Accessibility Alternatives
Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund
William & Nancy Ames
Ellen Anderson
Appalachian Mountain Club
 Berkshire Chapter
Katie Arsenault
Bafflin Foundation
Walter Banfield
John Bitzer
Boston Foundation
 Echo Rock Fund
 Moccasin Brook Fund
 September Fund
 Skylight Fund
Sandy & Allen Tupper Brown
Bob Busby & Maureen Conte
Cabot Family Charitable Trust
Mary Canning & Harold Goldman, MD
Richard Chase, Sr.
Robert A. Clark & Fifi Scoufopoulos
Clark Charitable Trust
Elizabeth Coe
Community Foundation of
 Western Massachusetts
The Conservation Fund
Barbara & Roger Corey, Sr.
Oona M. Coy
The Cricket Foundation
Joe & Kristy Delfausse
Nancy Desmond
Carrie Dolmat-Connell
Eastern Mountain Sports
Aaron Ellison & Elizabeth Farnsworth
Far Fetched Jewelry
The Farm School
Fields Pond Foundation
The Fieldstone Foundation
Josiah & Carol Ann Fisk
William O. & Lila Foye
Frank Stanley Beverage Foundation

Dick French & Emily Samuels
Polly F. French
Nansi & Leonard Glick
Alice & Rick Godfrey
Dr. Paul J. & Melinda Godfrey
Leslie Goldstein & John Mosimann
Greenfield Savings Bank
Harold & Mary Ross Foundation
Haymarket People's Fund
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Elmyra Iversen
Mary Eliot Jackson
John W. Boynton Foundation
David & Anne Marie Kittredge, Jr.
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Sarah Kohler
Susan LaScala & Jeff Blomstedt
Daniel G. Leahy & Julia Rabin
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Living Spring Foundation
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Polly & Charles Longworth
Stephen & Hilary Loring
Rebecca French Lynn
Ken & Barbara Maniha
Thomas Mann III
Howard Mathison
Micky McKinley & Samuel Green
Meetinghouse Foundation
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Norcross Wildlife Foundation
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O Beautiful Gaia

Oatis Foundation
Nathan Olson
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Ina & Mason Phelps
Margaret Power-Biggs
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Sirius Design
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The Sudbury Foundation
Sweet Water Trust
Dr. Stephen Thompson
Peter & Sigrid Tishler
Tortuga Foundation
Karen Tucker
Unity Foundation
Margaret Urquhart
The Valley Land Fund
Edward & Linda Vitone
Banfield Walter
Eric White
Dorothy Williams
Katharine Wolff & Michael Bronnert
Henry Woolsey
John & Ledlie Woolsey
John M. & Ann Woolsey III
Allen Young

In case of errors or omissions, or for more information, please contact Nathan Rudolph at rudolph@mountgrace.org or (978) 248-2043 x 18

SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOND BILL

BY JAY RASKU

The most important piece of Massachusetts land conservation legislation for the next five years is upon us.

Massachusetts' working farms and forests, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and beaches are disappearing at an alarming rate. According to the Massachusetts Audubon Society, every day more than 40 acres of open space are converted to residential, commercial, or industrial uses in Massachusetts.

The Environmental Bond is the foundation for all state land conservation programs in the Commonwealth. The bond finances the conservation of farmland, working forests, endangered species habitat, recreation land, water supply areas, and other environmental projects. A range of programs, from the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program to the Self-Help land acquisition grants, rely on the Environmental Bond Bill.

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Environmental Bond Bill

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Currently, these programs are running out of money. The last Environmental Bond Bill was passed in 2002. Massachusetts needs the current bill to pass in the next five months in order to keep these programs funded.

The good news is that Governor Patrick filed his Environmental Bond Bill (H.4446) on December 21, 2007. The Bond Bill increases funds for conservation 65% over the previous four years, and would authorize a remarkable \$250 million for land acquisition over the next five years, fulfilling a pledge Patrick made during his campaign for governor.

Unfortunately, it is likely that the bill will stall in the legislature and not pass in time to provide funds that conservation programs urgently need now.

The effort to pass the Environmental Bond Bill needs your help! Two phone calls from you will make a real impact.

Please call or write to Speaker of the House Salvatore DiMasi and your own State Representative, tell them why the Environmental Bond Bill is important to you, and urge its quick passage.

The Honorable Salvatore DiMasi
Massachusetts State House
Room 356
Boston, MA 02133
617-722-2500

You can find your own State Representative at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/citytown.htm>

Phone numbers and State House room numbers for Representatives are at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/memmenuh.htm>

The Massachusetts State House general phone number is (617) 722-2000

Supporting Your Local Landscape

BY NATHAN RUDOLPH

What do hiking the Tully Loop Trail, putting on a concert, and team bird watching have in common? They're all ways community members have helped support Mount Grace.

Mount Grace supporters and music lovers mingled at Smith College's Sage Hall this January to enjoy Steven Schoenberg's unique improvisational takes on classical and contemporary musical themes. The event was originally proposed by Steven and Jane Schoenberg—long-time members of Mount Grace—as a way of raising funds to attract matching state money for current Mount Grace projects. The idea soon grew into a multi-faceted event that raised thousands of dollars for Mount Grace.

Glenn Motzkin and Bill Lafley, avid birders for decades, are long-time participants in Mass Audubon's competitive bird-a-thon. Statewide, Audubon birders have logged up to 260 species cumulatively during the event. In recent years, Glenn and Bill have identified an average of 125 species locally in

the 24-hours of the annual spring event. Sponsors pledge 25 cents, 50 cents, even \$1 per species—or just choose a flat sum to donate. In 2004, Glenn and Bill decided to continue giving a list of species spotted to their local sanctuary, which increases the total funds that sanctuary raises, while asking their sponsors to support Mount Grace's local land protection work. Since then, they have raised nearly \$2,000 for Mount Grace. They'll be competing again on May 16-17 in Mass Audubon's 25th annual bird-a-thon.



PHOTO BY JOHN BURK

Garth Shaneyfelt and Sean Pollock relied on their own two feet for a fundraiser last September. The two joined for a sponsored hike of the 22-mile Tully Trail, starting at Tully Lake and proceeding clockwise up and down the trail's hills to return, ten hours later, to the lake. "The view from Tully Mountain at 8am was awe-inspiring – a fluffy bed of low clouds with early morning sun above and a lonely little mountain in the distance, poking out of the clouds like an island in Tully Lake. Hiking this amazing trail strengthened my desire to support Mount Grace because of Mount Grace's role in protecting it," says Pollock.

Unrestricted Foundation Gifts

\$20,000 from the Tortuga Foundation

\$1,000 from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts—Lila Teich Gold Charitable Fund

Gifts were Received *in Honor of*

Barbara Corey

Carol Hillman

Joanne McGee

John & Mary Williamson

Gifts were Received *in Memory of*

Harry Goldman

Frederick Hellen

Ken Morley

Juliette Roy

Special Thanks *from Mount Grace to:*

Everyone who helped at Steven Schoenberg's January 18th Benefit Concert

Steven and Jane Schoenberg for organizing and performing

Smith College, Kara Noble and the rest of the Sage Hall Event Staff

Barry Moser, Jamie Young, and David Graham Wolf for donations of art for the silent auction

Event Sponsors: Whole Foods Market, Valley Advocate, Smith & Reynolds Commercial and Industrial Appraisal, Cornerstone Insurance

Event Supporters: New Salem General Store, Stan's Liquors, Frames/Ink, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Dean's Beans

Marie Erie, for volunteer help at the concert and in our office

Anne Cervantes and Carlie Gaida for volunteer work at our office

The Rotary Club of Athol-Orange for their invitation to present at their November meeting

Bill Cole for his financial advice and expertise

Don Flye and Dan Bolton for leading the January hike around Long Pond

Hartman's Herb Farm in Barre for hosting our annual board retreat

Allen Young and John Burk for their contributions to the newsletter

Paul Wanta for running the February tracking workshop



Celt Grant and Allen Young for hosting our membership brunch

Mitch Hartley, Dave Small, Doug Walsh, David Ames, Bill Rose, and Brandon Kibbe for help with a 2007 North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant to conserve land in Thousand Acre Swamp

Lynn Harper, Jim French, Catherine Skiba, John O'Keefe, Brian Hall, and Rich Chandler for presenting at the November 15th 2007 Community Conservation Forum

John O'Keefe and David Foster for providing the Harvard Forest Fisher Museum for events

Jim O'Connor for co-sponsoring *Views from Mount Grace*

Deb Curtis for volunteer work on the local landscape collateral fund brochure.

Stewardship

New Northfield Trail

After donating a CR on 8.6 acres of woodland in Northfield, Nancy Ames and her husband Bill, a board member of Mount Grace, are planning a hiking trail on the property. A trail easement, which allows for a public trail through the property on a route decided by the Ames's and Mount Grace, was written into the CR before it was recorded at the end of last year. "By giving the public a place to see the surrounding land, the Ames gift has protected a spot of great natural beauty for Northfield and for lovers of nature throughout the region." said Tom Wansleben, Mount Grace stewardship biologist, who is planning the trail with the Ames family. Work on the trail, which was supported by the Northfield Conservation Commission, and Selectboard, is planned for later in the year.



Stewardship Team Prepares for Spring

With a variety of expertise ranging from trail-building to forestry, pteridology, and entomology, the new Mount Grace Stewardship Team can bring a broad perspective to any questions about stewardship on Mount Grace's 1,300+ acres of conservation areas. Formed over the winter to assist Stewardship Biologist Tom Wansleben with the work of managing Mount Grace property, the team was formed in February with an agenda focusing on a species inventory of the 511-acre Arthur Iversen Conservation Area and on prioritizing and taking care of the backlog of work around the conservation areas, including trail maintenance, invasive species removal, and release and plantings of mast trees. Work at Iversen has already begun. Work at other conservation areas will begin after mud season. Anyone interested in participating in stewardship work at any Mount Grace property should contact David Kotker at (978) 248-2043 x19 or kotker@mountgrace.org

Pteridology...it's the study of ferns, of course.

Upcoming Spring 2008 Events

Volunteer Workday
Skyfields Arboretum, Athol
1461 Old Keene Road
Sunday, March 30th
10 am – 3 pm

Come out to Skyfields Arboretum and help us with some spring cleaning. We need energetic people to help with weeding, pruning, and other yard maintenance. If you've never been out to Skyfields, this is a great chance to visit the arboretum, walk the trails, and help keep Skyfields beautiful. Please bring work gloves. Lunch will be provided. Rain/snow date Saturday, April 5th.

Apple Tree Release
Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area, Winchendon
New Boston Road
Saturday, April 26th
9 am – 1 pm

Join Mount Grace and the Army Corps of Engineers, managers of the 4,500-acre Birch Hill Reservoir Area for a hands-on seminar demonstrating simple techniques for pruning, planting and releasing wild apple trees, an important food resource for wildlife. Meet at the Dennison Lake parking lot in Winchendon.

Digital Photography Workshop
Skyfield Arboretum, Athol
1461 Old Keene Road
Saturday, May 10th, 12:30 – 4:30 pm
Saturday, May 17th, 1 – 2:30 pm

Learn the tricks of the trade of outdoor digital photography with Phillipston photographer Norm Eggert, who specializes in images of rural New England. The first day will begin with a basic overview and then focus on taking pictures of the wildflowers and woods around Skyfields. Participants can also reconvene one week later to discuss and critique their photos with Norm. The workshop is free and is limited to 25 people (priority given to Mount Grace members). A sample of Norm Eggert's work can be found at www.eggphoto.com

For information, or to register for an event, please contact David Kotker at (978) 248-2043 extension 19 or kotker@mountgrace.org



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is sponsored by:**

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M O U N T G R A C E L A N D T R U S T M E M B E R S H I P F O R M

Think Globally, Donate Locally!™

Please join Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. Thanks to our members, Mount Grace is one of the most active land conservation organizations in Massachusetts, conserving more than 21,000 acres of the local landscape.

Name _____

Address _____ Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (H) _____ (W) _____ (email) _____

MEMBERSHIP FORM—Please check all which apply:

- I would like to renew / start my membership with a tax-deductible contribution of:
_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ \$1,000 _____ other
- I would like to pledge \$ _____ per quarter to Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.
- I would like more information on how to protect a piece of land that is special to me.
- I would like to include Mount Grace in my will or as part of my estate. Please send me more information.
- I am interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities at Mount Grace.
- Please do not use my name in your list of contributors.
- Please do not share my name with other organizations.

Please forward to Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, 1461 Old Keene Road, Athol, MA 01331-9734. Thank you!

SPRING 2008