

# Views from Mount Grace



FALL 2019  
VOLUME 30, NO. 2

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Norcross Hill Conservation Project
- Completion of the Farmland Inventory
- Margaret Power-Biggs Profile: Susan Davis Patterson
- Report From the Field: CR Monitoring
- MA Food Trust Program at Quabbin Harvest
- 4th Annual Family Camp Out

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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LANDVEST INC.

The magnificent views from the Norcross Hill Wildlife Management Area in Templeton are now protected forever.

## Norcross Hill Conservation Project: Protecting History and Beauty in Templeton

BY SARAH WELLS

Land is potent. Some landscapes are especially provocative, catching us off-guard with a visceral reaction. Maybe it's a short, sharp inhale or the sudden presence of goosebumps. Norcross Hill in Templeton is that type of place.

The weight of its beauty and history is palpable. There's a long, complicated story living here, and everyone who is familiar with the former Fernald School and its expansive, scenic vistas is bound to have an opinion about the place. Attorney Thomas J. Frain of the Fernald Corporation, a non-profit committed to the care of intellectually disabled people, is keenly aware of the Fernald School's painful history and the corporation's own evolution. For decades, Attorney Frain and his fellow Fernald Corporation board members have been committed to conserving the Norcross Hill land. For Frain, it's a way of honoring the Corporation's legacy of serving society's most vulnerable - the forgotten voiceless. Last fall, with the help of Keith Ross — a LandVest senior advisor and Mount Grace founder — the Fernald Corporation began talking with MassWildlife in earnest.

> continued on page 3



# Views from Mount Grace

FALL 2019 • VOLUME 30, No.2

*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.*

Dear Friends,

The ancient saying that *the only constant in life is change* is true, both in nature and at Mount Grace. I've long had the impression that it is the changing aspect of land that helps us feel in relationship with it. We love the particular light at a certain moment of the day, for example. Or the way the seasons pass across a place we are familiar with. We cherish the differences of each day while the place itself is a constant we rely on.



This fall is bringing us Emma Ellsworth, Mount Grace's new Deputy Director, following in the footsteps of David Graham Wolf, who is now running the independently founded TerraCorps, Inc, a program originated by Mount Grace in 2008. Two-year TerraCorps alum, KimLynn Nguyen, will join the staff as our Stewardship Manager. And, three new TerraCorps members will join our team from September to July 2020.

The office landscape will be missing Lisa Cormier, Jay Rasku, and Jamie Pottern who are on to new endeavors after being fixtures here for twelve, thirteen, and six years, respectively. Each of these members of the Mount Grace family has made an indelible mark on our work and we cherish them and their time here.

While active projects, landowners, supporters, staff, TerraCorps, volunteers, and Board and Committee members evolve, we collectively remain committed to benefitting the environment, the economy, and future generations by protecting important land and encouraging land stewardship; Mount Grace's mission since 1986. Thank you for being part of this work.

Thank you,

Leigh Youngblood  
Executive Director

## MOUNT GRACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Bec Sheinkopf, *Youth Education Coordinator*
- Corey Wrinn, *Land Stewardship Coordinator*
- Valerie Cedrone, *Regional Collaboration Coordinator*

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

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# Celebrating the Completion of the Farmland Inventory!

BY KAT KOWALSKI

For the past 4 years, Mount Grace staff and AmeriCorps members have been conducting town by town farmland inventories of the Mount Grace region. The need for the Farmland Inventory Project was identified at the 2014 Greater Quabbin Food Alliance Winter Gathering to make better informed decisions regarding farmland succession and conservation in the region.

The farmland inventory is driven by conversations with community members on town boards and committees to understand the conservation status, primary products produced, development threats, community values, and soil quality of every farm in the town studied. This Spring, the farmland inventories in Gardner, Westminster, Hubbardston, and Ashburnham marked the completion of the project in 22 out of the 23-towns in the Mount Grace region. The one exception is the town of Leyden where preliminary studies found that the inventory process was not necessary due to the high percentage of farmland already conserved.

Following the inventory, we were able to host successful estate planning workshops titled “Planning for the Future of your Land”. We invited agricultural landowners identified during the inventory to learn more about farm succession planning, estate and financial planning, forest management, and conservation. Participants in these workshops were surprised by the findings from the inventory process and eager to learn what they can



**Woody End Farm in Westminster was studied as part of this year's farmland inventory. There, M.L. Altobelli raises Nigerian Dwarf Goats and operates her business, Greenery in Motion.**

do to keep farmland in their town open and productive. The information documented and partnerships built during the inventory and estate planning workshops will be used as a planning tool for Mount Grace, our partners, and the communities we serve to advance the prioritization of farmland conservation throughout our entire region!

## Norcross Hill Conservation *> continued from page 1*

With 465 acres of pristine woods and fields along Norcross Hill and Brook (separate from surrounding state property known as the Templeton Development Center), the land was a perfect prospect for the state's Landscape Partnership Program (LPP) grant, and a slam-dunk for meeting MassWildlife's regional wildlife habitat conservation goals.

The LPP grant provides significant funding, but in order to apply, 500 contiguous acres and multiple partners are required. This challenge was right up Mount Grace's alley. With the Fernald Corporation, Mount Grace worked with MassWildlife and the North County Land Trust (NCLT) to create a viable project. The Town of Templeton, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Fields Pond Foundation, and private landowners Jo-Anne and Danny Burdin enthusiastically agreed to participate in this ambitious land conservation effort. MassWildlife hit the ground running and successfully purchased the Fernald Corporation land, which will be known as the Norcross Hill Wildlife Management Area. The remainder of the projects will be completed by spring of 2020, with the Burdin project being Mount Grace's very first CR in Templeton (to be co-held with NCLT). The protection of the 465-acre Fernald Corporation land is the culmination of many years of effort by Attorney Frain and his incredibly dedicated fellow board members. Mount Grace is grateful to have played a part in turning the long-held vision for conservation into a reality.



# MARGARET POWER-BIGGS SOCIETY

## Member Profile: Susan Davis Patterson

BY DAVID KOTKER

Mount Grace's newest project is a partnership with Chuck and Livvy Tarleton to protect Sunset View Farm in Winchendon with an option to purchase at agricultural value—ensuring it will always be owned by farmers in the future. Mount Grace and North County Land Trust will also hold a conservation restriction on the land together.

When the Tarletons decided to protect their farm, they began with a call to Mount Grace. But it was after meeting with Mount Grace that Chuck and Livvy really went into action, reaching out to a lifetime's worth of friends and neighbors to see if they could help raise the final \$70,000 needed to complete this project.

Susan Davis Patterson was one of the first to respond, becoming the newest member of our Margaret Power-Biggs Society by making a gift of \$1,000 to help protect a farm she has loved since she first saw it in 1979.

Susan met Livvy at Middlebury College in 1963, and they have been friends ever since. "The first time I saw the farm they were just starting out and they were both still teaching," Susan says. "I thought: Wow—to take on all of this, plus the teaching jobs, that's a lot! But they did it. They started small, and it took a lot of work to make it such a perfect farm today."

With \$8,000 raised in the opening days of the campaign, Susan hopes to encourage more people to visit and support her favorite farm. "Living in Vermont, I've seen plenty of farmstands," she



**Livvy and Susan all smiles on the farm in Winchendon!**

adds, "but I have never been to one that's as attractive as Chuck and Livvy's. Everything looks so beautiful. The way you're invited in and made welcome, the way they care for the land and the people, that farmstand, and the sugar house represent the very best of New England heritage, and I love it. I love all of it."

*If you would like information about joining the Margaret Power-Biggs Society or helping to protect Sunset View Farm, please contact David Kotker at 978-248-2055 x19 or [kotker@mountgrace.org](mailto:kotker@mountgrace.org)*

## Report From The Field: Monitoring Conservation Restrictions

BY LISA MCLOUGHLIN

It's a crisp spring morning, and I'm walking in a hundred acres of deep, dark forest. Patches of snow remain under trees, but the brook is flowing freely. Deer signs abound, and following their path back among the trees I find magical clearings, majestic glacial erratics, huge twisted maples, and grape vines trailing and climbing everywhere.

These lands are not mine, but I have adopted them as "my" conservation restrictions to monitor. Besides the opportunity to take a lovely hike at least once a year, I feel especially grateful to

be helping their owners and Mount Grace care for their unique wildness and beauty.

The Mount Grace stewardship staff will assist monitoring stewards by providing an initial one on one training, a GPS with the parcel outline on it, and the parcel description of the property. The path to follow, the aspects of the land to pay most attention to, and the photographs to feature is up to the individual.

# State Support for Food Access at Quabbin Harvest

BY CATHY STANTON

Quabbin Harvest is proud to be one of the first recipients of funds from the Massachusetts Food Trust Program, which provides loans, grants, and business assistance for increasing access to healthy, affordable food in low-income, underserved areas. The co-op received a \$20,000 loan and a \$15,000 grant to support a marketing campaign, improvements to our financial reporting systems, and some rebalancing of inventory toward locally-sourced products.

We're particularly heartened by this support because it recognizes our hybrid nature and the challenges that result. We're a for-profit entity, but there's also a substantial social component to our mission. We want to make good food available to everyone and help strengthen the local economy by creating jobs, keeping money circulating close to home, and—key to our partnership with Mount Grace—serving as an outlet for local farmers and other food producers.

But there's an inherent tension between paying a fair price to local producers and distributors while staying affordable for low-income shoppers and bringing in enough money to keep the store going. There are grants out there to help make good food accessible to people at all income levels, but virtually all are aimed at non-profit organizations.

Enter the Mass Food Trust Program, whose other initial recipients include a health center, an urban farm, and small and large food stores. The program was sparked by two health-

Mount Grace currently holds more than 80 conservation restrictions and as more properties are conserved that number grows every year. Volunteering as a monitor helps Mount Grace fulfill its accreditation requirements and care for the land that is protected, so monitoring a property is much more than just a fun woodland jaunt.

Contact KimLynn Nguyen at [nguyen@mountgrace.org](mailto:nguyen@mountgrace.org) or 978-248-2055 x14 to adopt your own conservation restriction—they're just there waiting for you.



**Cathy Stanton, Quabbin Harvest Board President, receiving the MA Food Trust Grant check at Franklin County Community Development Coalition, accompanied by Alan Singer, Lending Program Director and Amelio, Official Office Cat.**

focused non-profits, seeded with funding from the Baker-Pollito administration and managed through two CDFIs (Community Development Financial Institutions), the Local Enterprise Assistance Fund (LEAF) in eastern Mass. and the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, a longtime supporter of food and farming ventures in the western part of Mount Grace's service area. It's a great example of cross-sector collaboration and a nice vote of confidence in the vision of Quabbin Harvest as a community-owned food store that can nourish our whole community.



**The Whitney Memorial Forest in Winchendon is one of the many properties which volunteers can monitor to help the Mount Grace Stewardship Team.**



# Happy Campers at the 4th Annual Family Camp Out

BY CAMI DUQUET

This summer, the Youth Education Program set out to spend a night under the stars at Dexter Park Community School in Orange for the 4th Annual Family Camp Out. The Camp Out invited families from the local area to enjoy a night of camping with guided activities throughout the school grounds.

The campers arrived in the early afternoon on Saturday, June 15th, taking the time to set up their tents, explore the surrounding hiking trails and learn how to build a fire. As dusk set, the group gathered around the campfire and listened to live singer and guitarist John Demers, before setting out on a night hike in the woods and returning to moth lights activities led by Lula Field and Dave Small. Many campfire stories and a few too many roasted marshmallows later, the happy campers retreated to their tents falling asleep to the noises of the night.

The event was led by Jess Tierney, TerraCorps Youth Education Coordinator along with Mount Grace staff and volunteers who collaborated to put together the many activities and logistics in place for the day. Jess explains “Getting youth out on the land is essential to creating a deep connection with nature so that the future generations will come to love and care for the land just as Mount Grace does today”.



NORM EGGERT PHOTOGRAPHY

Local artist John Demers playing classic oldies on his guitar as happy campers watch on.

The Camp Out brings the community together for a fun and safe day where kids can play, learn, explore, and create memories surrounded by nature!

Thank you to all the families, volunteers, and sponsors that made this year’s Camp Out such a success and we hope to see you next year!

## FALL 2019 UPCOMING EVENTS – *Join Us!*

### Garlic and Arts Festival

Saturday-Sunday, September 28-29th  
60 Chestnut Hill Rd, Orange

### Bake Sale Benefit for Sunset View Farm

Saturday, September 21st 10am-2pm  
156 Gardner Rd, Winchendon

### Mount Grace’s 33rd ANNUAL MEETING!

Saturday, October 5th, 2019

### West Gate Farm

80 Eden Trail, Bernardston

(See attached insert to register!)

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

## Grants Received:

Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts	\$20,000
Fields Pond Foundation	\$20,000
John W. Boynton Fund	\$20,000
Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts	\$15,000
Massachusetts DCR Recreational Trails Program	\$13,490

## Gifts were Received *In Memory of*

Robert and Edith Potter, Elizabeth Farnsworth, Barbara Corey, Dennis Wall

## Special Thanks from Mount Grace to ~

Amilah Richards, Claire Baker, Cynthia Cetto, Dave McLean, Dennis Sean, Desmond Pottinger, Donald Flye, Gary Brigham, Holden Woodworth, Charlotte Duquet, John Holston, Katie Cauley, Laurel Facey, Megan Balmos, Michael Humphries, Nancy Ames, Norm Flye, Pat Larson, Pat Worth, Shannyn Moulton, Steve Rawson, Susan Sharbaugh, and the Buckler Family for volunteering with Mount Grace on Earth Day

Anne Cervantes, Bonnie House, Jennifer Bower, Norm Eggert, and TerraCorps members (James Eager, Robin Austin, Lee Halasz, Sara Amish) for volunteering at the Open Space Conference

Carl Kamp, Danny Monette, Dave Small, Ernie LeBlanc, and Steve Rawson for serving on the Eagle Reserve Advisory Group

Bill Corey, Juli Gould, Mimi Hellen Jones, and Pam Barnes Chevalier for contributing to the Invasive Plant and Insect Presentation

Bill and Joanne McGee, Mindy Nadolski, Jerry Wagener, Joe Stacy, Sam and Barbara Richardson, Sue Space, Robin Conley, and Carol Lebo for serving on the Friends of Alderbrook Meadows Committee

Anne Gobi, Joanne McGee, Joe Stacy and the Northfield VFW Post 9874, Robin Conley, The Ames Family, Ray Jackson, Bobby Curly, Carol Lebo, Mimi Hellen Jones for participating in the Memorial Day Weekend event at Alderbrook Meadows

Christian Hains, Dave Small, John O'Keefe, Laurie Boosahda, Linda Wells, Lula Field, Michael Humphries, Norm Eggert, Bobby Curley, Steve Svoboda, and Mimi Hellen Jones for participating in the Great American Campout

Steve Rawson, Gerry Marcanio, and Rob Jalbert for building and installing the Eagle Reserve kiosk, Christian Hains, Dave Small, Dick O'Brien, George Northrop, Jay Rasku, Jeff Blanchard, Jeff Johnstone, Jim Solinas, Joanne McGee, Lis McLoughlin, Martin Bowers, Michael Young, Norm Eggert, Pat Worth, Ray Jackson, Sarah Wells, and Steve Rawson for contributing to the successful opening of the Eagle Reserve Conservation Area

Ray Jackson, Martin and Jen Bowers, Steve Rawson, Jay Rasku, Marie Urquhart, Molly Tarleton, Judy Grossi, Keang Tedstone, and Beth Arseneau for volunteering at Sunset View Farm

Pat Worth and Michael Flye for lending us their trailer, Marie Urquhart, Michael Humphries

Kim Ansin, Steve Rawson, Al Rose, Bonnie House, Ben Urquhart, and the Winchendon Historical Society for hosting and speaking at Mount Grace events



This fall, we are excited to be adding new leadership to our team: meet Emma Ellsworth of Orange MA, our new Deputy Director. Welcome aboard Emma!



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## Help us Protect *Sunset View Farm!*



Meet Chuck and Livvy Tarleton of Sunset View Farm! Mount Grace is working with the Tarletons to protect their farm and make it affordable for the next generation of farmers to get on the land. Sunset View Farm grows organic fruits and vegetables on their 70-acre property off of route 140 in Winchendon and sells the fresh produce in the farm stand just a couple feet from where they were grown! See page 4 to learn about the new Mount Grace members who are helping in the campaign.

Support the campaign today at: <https://www.gofundme.com/protectsunsetviewfarm>