

Views from Mount Grace

MOUNT GRACE LAND CONSERVATION TRUST • CONSERVING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

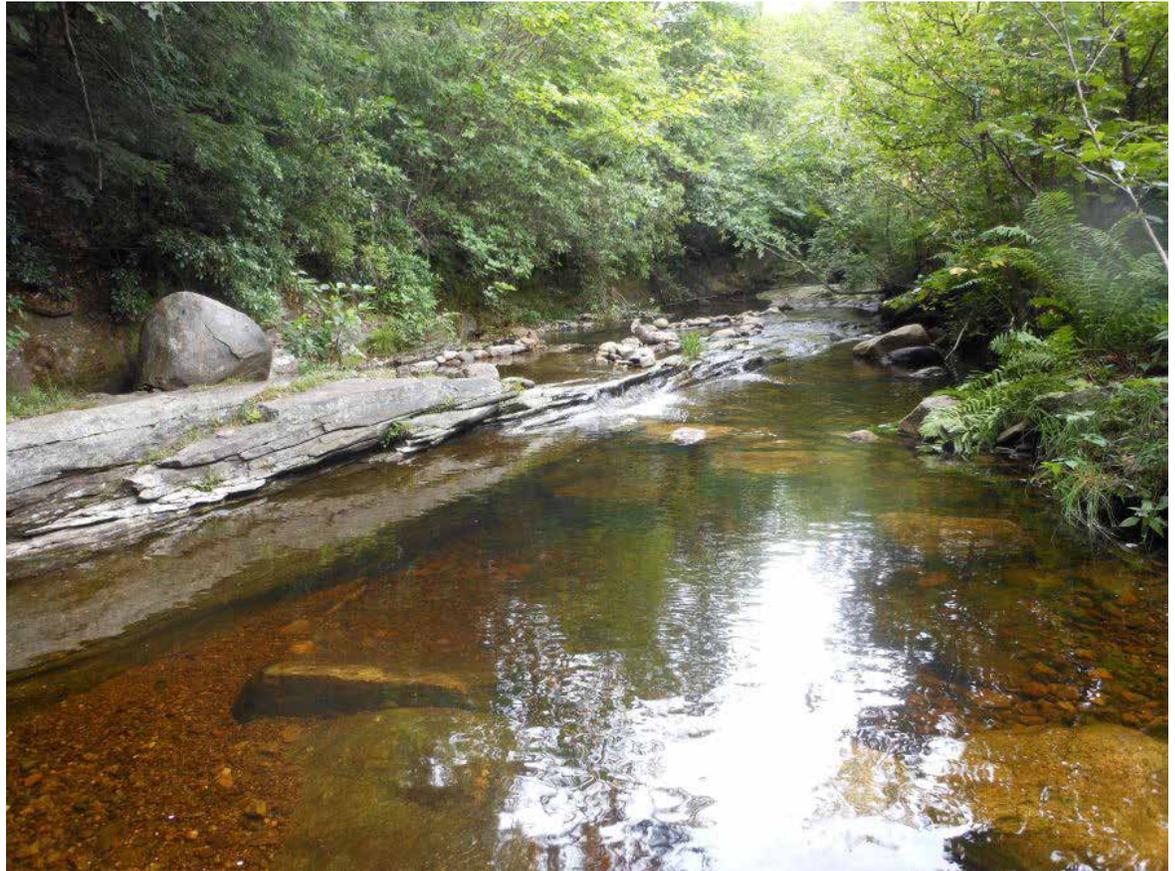


SPRING 2017
VOLUME 28, NO. 1
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Six Generations on a Montague Farm
- Making Conservation History in Phillipston
- Margaret Power-Biggs Society Profile
- A Love of the Land: Reggie Haughton's Legacy
- Mormon Hollow Festival
- Volunteers Support Mount Grace's Stewardship Mission
- Backyard Campout! And more events
- Mount Grace Updates

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Mormon Hollow Brook now runs through protected land for almost its entire length. (Photo: Ivan Ussach)

Friends & Neighbors Help Protect 6th-Generation Hunting Farm

BY JAMIE POTTERN

On February 6, 2017, the 6th-generation Hunting Farm in Montague was permanently protected with the help of Mount Grace, the Town of Montague, the Massachusetts Landscape Partnership Program grant, and innumerable friends and community members. This project is the first of many led by Mount Grace to close before the end of June 2017 as part of a multi-year, multi-landowner project totaling more than 700 acres, called the Mormon Hollow Working Lands Corridor Project.

Back in May of 2015, Mount Grace held a workshop entitled "Options for the Future of Your Land" for farmland and woodland owners, which was hosted at the Diemand Farm in Wendell. Catalyzed by Wendell farmer Bill Facey of Sugarbush Farm—who was in the process of protecting his 75-acre farm with Mount Grace—Bill and his wife Laurel invited dozens of neighbors to attend the workshop. They wanted to inspire their neighbors to consider protecting their land too, so that they could help keep the broader landscape protected and keep farming alive in their community.

> continued on page 3





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Dear Friends,

The triple-decker heron rookery in the 1,000-Acre Swamp on page 5 is both a sign of spring and of neighborliness. Working well with our neighbors has been the secret of Mount Grace's success since its beginning.



Even as policy and budgetary changes are threatening the health of the land and specific programs like AmeriCorps, I hope that you, too, are savoring the rejuvenating signs of spring. Challenging times can help us appreciate our neighbors, friends, and family more than ever. If that is the case for you, this newsletter will make you feel better.

On June 4th please join us at Diemand Farm in Wendell for *Party in the Hollow*. With live bands, chicken dinners, hikes, a fun run, and more, we will be celebrating the conservation of eight family lands in our most recent landscape partnership project. The Mormon Hollow Working Lands Corridor project began with a neighborhood meeting at Diemand Farm. With everyone pitching in, the result is 700 acres of multi-generational family lands conserved in the very pristine Mormon Hollow Brook watershed in both Montague and Wendell.

2017 will be the year our largest-ever landscape-scale project, Q2W, or Quabbin to Wachusett, will finally come to fruition. Craig Twohey, owner of the King Phillip Restaurant on Rt. 2A in Phillipston is one of dozens of landowners in nine towns helping to keep clean water flowing to 2.5 million people and businesses in the greater Boston area. Craig lives in a restored historic home next door to our Fox Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, donated to Mount Grace in 1989 and 1998.

It is reassuring to me to see, over and over, how love of the land brings different people together. Craig's neighbor in Phillipston, Reggie Houghton, made a living as a homebuilder, which wouldn't endear him to many conservationists. Read inside how looking past differences and listening to find common ground can bring surprising richness to our lives. Your support of our Spring Appeal will help us continue to build bridges into the future.

Thank you,

Leigh Youngblood
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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:

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Making Conservation History in Phillipston

BY DAVID KOTKER

Standing on Craig and Jean Twohey's land on Phillipston's Ward Hill you can see the steeples of two Congregational Churches in nearby Phillipston Center and in Templeton. That's eloquent testimony to the return of local forests. A past owner of the home noted in 1900 that he could count thirty steeples from the hilltop, and see as far as Boston.

If the Twoheys have their way, those resurgent forests are here to stay. This spring, the couple transferred a conservation restriction (CR) to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Water Supply, permanently protecting 49 acres mostly within the Quabbin watershed. "We'd much rather protect the land than sell it for development," says Craig. "The best part about the CR is we still own the land. We can get our cordwood from it and run it the way we have been."

The couple has run Phillipston's King Phillip Restaurant since 1983. They see their work at the restaurant and on the land as "a labor of love," and a way to support the community and sustain

local history. Craig describes the process of land conservation as "a lot like marinating a steak. You've got to take the time to let it sit until it's ready."



A monarch butterfly hard at work pollinating in an open clearing near the Twohey's home.

Craig, an avid hunter, was able to work with a forester to create small clearings on the land to create prime habitat for birds like the American woodcock and ruffed grouse. Being able to manage their land was an important factor for the Twoheys. "We looked at all the options and we talked through what we wanted to do with our land with Jay Rasku," Craig remembers. "It's a big decision and was kind of a moving target since we did change the plans a little bit, but Jay helped us get the land protected the way we wanted."

The CR is part of Mount Grace's Quabbin to Wachusett Forest Legacy Project, which, along with the Quabbin Heritage Landscape Partnership Project, will permanently protect dozens of properties and more than 4,500 acres by the end of the year. The projects are funded by the United States Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program and the Massachusetts Landscape Partnership Program. Additional support is provided by the Bafflin Foundation, and the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts.

Friends & Neighbors Help Protect Farm *> continued from page 1*

What started as a meeting of neighbors in a barn quickly became a multi-landowner, landscape-scale conservation project involving 10 neighbors in the towns of Wendell and Montague. Mount Grace, along with the Towns, and the Department of Fish & Game, applied for and were successfully awarded an \$800,000 grant to help protect these incredible working landscapes.

Early on, multiple neighbors suggested that Mount Grace speak with farmer Willie Hunting, whose 80-acre property is located on Montague's eastern boundary with Wendell, and which connects thousands of acres of already protected state forest land in the two towns. Willie Hunting, the 6th-generation of his family on this land, raises hay and goats, as well as sustainably managed timber. The property is home to diverse wildlife, pristine brooks, scenic pastures and upland forests, and an old cellar hole—a reminder of the generations of inhabitants on this land. This land also has significance to Native American tribes and was recommended for permanent protection by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

When Willie inherited this land he also inherited numerous farm dumps, which needed to be removed prior to the project closing. This past fall and winter, energetic volunteers, led by local attorney and retired Department of Fish & Game Land Agent Sam Lovejoy, cleaned up the property over a dozen volunteer clean up days. Sam also donated countless hours of time to support Willie every step of the way.

One final cleanup day will be needed this spring—please stay tuned to learn more about how you can help!

MARGARET POWER-BIGGS SOCIETY

MEMBER PROFILE: Lis McLoughlin & Warren Ondras

Lis McLoughlin serves on the Board of Mount Grace. She and her husband, Warren Ondras, joined the Margaret Power-Biggs Society in 2016 as she describes below.

In February of 2016 Leigh Youngblood and I were both speaking at a Sugar Shack Alliance anti-pipeline event, and she was on just before me (I was supposed to time her with her phone and couldn't get the alarm to stop). I spoke about the protection of Native American graves and sacred lands, and she spoke about Article 97.

After Leigh spoke I realized how important Article 97 was, and realized that no one else was taking up this essential legal position to defend Massachusetts' protected public lands. That night Warren and I decided to donate \$1,000 to Mount Grace, to help them to get a lawyer and put a cork in the pipeline. Mount Grace had by then become a much-needed hub in the fight, connecting landowners and helping us utilize our collective power.

None of us anticipated what a long and drawn out fight it would be, but whenever I saw Leigh testifying before legislative committees in Boston, or at local gatherings where people who love their land come together to tell stories, I was always glad we donated that money.

I like the breadth and depth of the Mount Grace vision of what land is and means to the people and to the plants and animals that inhabit it—to the big picture.

Our experience with the pipeline helped me truly appreciate the deep, professional knowledge and the networks that comprise Mount Grace. We need locally-rooted groups like this in place, not just for their ongoing work in protecting land, but also in an emergency to react with specialized knowledge and deep political understanding. Mount Grace has proven to me its value and worth as an institution that will stand up for the land and for our rights, and I am honored to be part of the Board to support that mission.

If you would like information about joining the Margaret Power-Biggs Society, please contact Major Gifts and Grants Manager David Kotker at 978-248-2055 x19 or kotker@mountgrace.org.



Love of the Land: Reggie Haughton's Legacy

BY SARAH WELLS

The work of the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership boils down to relationships—with the land, with landowners, and with partners. We are deeply thankful for those we've fostered with the Town of Phillipston and the families who own and care for the woods and waters of Thousand Acre Swamp. Remarkably, the Swamp escaped the impacts of our industrial past, which damaged many other sections of the Millers watershed. Excellent water quality and isolation from heavily developed areas have made the Swamp a haven for wildlife.

Thanks to the passion and persistence of countless people, including Bill Rose, Bonnie House, Rose Frizzell, Tom Brouillet, the MacCombie family, and the Haughton family, along with

local committees, state agencies, and Mount Grace, most of Thousand Acre Swamp is now protected.

The Haughton project began in 2010 and took just over two years, though a Selectman joked with us that “the Louisiana Purchase took less time to figure out.” Reggie and Mel Haughton appreciated the sentiment, but didn't mind spending a couple years crafting a legacy they'd spent decades nurturing. Married for nearly 58 years, they took great pride in restoring an old apple orchard and building their homestead on Baldwin Hill Road. Their love of the land was surpassed only by their love of family. Together, they gardened, tended their orchard, and shared too many stories and laughs to count with their children

Party in the Hollow Brings Community to Diemand Farm

BY DAVID KOTKER

Community has been the key to protecting Mormon Hollow.

From the scores of volunteers who turned out to help prepare Hunting Farm for conservation to the neighbors who got together at Diemand Farm in 2015 to begin the Mormon Hollow Working Lands Corridor Project (page 1), each step of this endeavor has been made thanks to a groundswell of support from the people of Wendell, Montague, and neighboring towns.

This year, Mount Grace will complete the project—permanently conserving more than 700 acres—and the whole community will celebrate at the Party in the Hollow on Sunday, June 4, 2017.

Diemand Farm, which hosted the original meeting that sparked the project, will also play host to the celebration, which will run from 10am-4pm and feature music by the Equalites, the Gaslight Tinkers, and more local groups; stories celebrating farmers and the land; family-friendly games and activities; and tours of the farm and land. Local art and craft vendors will be there as well as booths from Red Fire Farm (strawberries), Flayvors Ice Cream, Dean's Beans Coffee, and Element Brewing Company. Attendees can picnic or order a Diemand Farm lunch in advance on the Mount Grace website.



Join us for tours of Diemand Farm (Photo: Norm Eggert)

The day will begin at 10am with a fun run on trails through the neighboring Wendell State Forest. Run T-shirts will go to the early entrants. The Diemand Farm lunch will be served from noon-2pm for those who order one. Live music begins at 11am. More information is available on the Mount Grace website.

Tickets for the festival are \$10 (free for children under 12) and will benefit the project. Registration for the Chicken Run is also \$10. Lunch from Diemand Farm (Pulled Turkey BBQ Sandwich or Vegan Quinoa & Black Bean Salad) is \$10 or \$8 for a kids' lunch. Tickets, run registrations, and food should be ordered in advance at mountgrace.org.

and grandchildren at their “Grand View” cabin—with its incredible view of Mount Monadnock.

During our work with the Haughtons, a meeting was never complete without Reggie and Mel sharing a story (or five) about the latest critter to show up on the wildlife camera or their many Alaskan salmon fishing trips. As our relationship grew, so did their golden retriever puppy, Buffie—a true nature enthusiast always ready for a hike to the Swamp. Thanks to the generosity of the Haughton family and local and state grants, 89 acres were permanently conserved to create the Baldwin Hill Conservation Area. Just as Reggie and Mel dreamed, this land will now stay open and wild for generations.

Reggie Haughton passed away on January 8th, 2017. We are honored to have worked with him.



Hérons nesting in Thousand Acre Swamp

STEWARDSHIP

Our Volunteers Get Stuff Done

BY MARCELA MALDONADO

Dianne Salcedo is a busy member of the Orange community: she serves on the school board and tends her own greenhouses. She's also helping Mount Grace to grow the herbs and vegetables that will fill the Dexter Park school garden, a shared project of the school and Mount Grace designed to bring the kids in Orange closer to the land.

Volunteers also help monitor our conservation restrictions. About 10 of our Conservation Restrictions are being monitored by our volunteers. Some even go beyond simple monitoring. Kyle Cormier, who monitors the conservation restriction Mount Grace holds on Noonday Farm, also helped certify vernal pools on the property.

A dedicated group of volunteers have worked tirelessly with our Stewardship Program staff over the last year to design new signs for our Conservation Areas. Now that the ground has thawed, our volunteers will use the spring and summer months to install those signs, as well as kiosks, at selected Conservation Areas.



Some of Mount Grace's youngest volunteers prepare benches for the Dexter Park school garden

There are many ways to volunteer at Mount Grace. If you want to make a difference for the local landscape, consider volunteering as a conservation restriction monitor or a steward at one of our conservation areas, or help our crews install signs this spring.



SPRING 2017 UPCOMING EVENTS *Join Us!*

Party in the Hollow
Diemand Farm, Wendell
Mormon Hollow Road
Sunday, June 4
10am-4pm

Celebrate the conservation of 700+ acres in Wendell and Montague at the Party in the Hollow! Fun run at 10am, live music starting at 11, lunch served at noon. Buy tickets and sign up for lunch at mountgrace.org. See page 5 for more details.

**Greater Quabbin
Food Alliance Meeting**
Orange Innovation Center
131 West Main Street, Orange
Tuesday, June 6, 8:30am-3pm

Join us at the biannual Greater Quabbin Food Alliance meeting to share your ideas with the community, learn about local projects, and join a network of farmers, businesses, and organizations working to strengthen local food initiatives. The business meeting runs until noon, followed by lunch from the Petersham Store and a visit to Honest Weight Brewery from 1-3pm.

**Great American
Backyard Campout**
Skyfields Arboretum
1461 Old Keene Road, Athol
4pm, Saturday, June 23-10am,
Sunday, June 24

Explore Skyfields Arboretum and celebrate the outdoors with Mount Grace staff and volunteers when the Great American Backyard Campout comes to Skyfields! This year's program is Camping 101: an introduction to outdoor camping for new campers. Tents will be provided for campers who request them in advance. Join us for stories, songs, smores, and more!

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Grants Received:

The Russell Farm and Forest Foundation	\$20,000	Sugarbush Farm Project
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	\$6,500	Stewardship/Youth Education

Gifts were received *In Honor of:* the Larson Tatistcheff Family

Gifts were received *In Memory of:* Reggie Haughton, Sr., and Michael Solfiell

Special Thanks *from* Mount Grace to ~

Anne Cervantes, Cyndy Cetto, and Pat Worth for office support

Kim Ansin, Chrissy Bjorge, David and Lynn Christianson, Carol Coan, Ray DiDonato, Anne and Faith Diemand, Laurel Facey, David Foster, Chris Gagnon, Jim Hafner, Brian Hall, Pam Hanold, Mimi Hellen Jones, Rosie Heidkamp, Hillary Hoffman, Tammy Ketcham, Jeff Legros, Suzanne LoManto, Al MacIntyre, Joanne McGee, Micky McKinley, Lis McLoughlin, Kees and Paul Overgaag, Doug Plavin, Steve Rawson, Nancy Regan and the Mount Wachusett Community College Mountaineers Hiking and Recreation Club, Caro Roszell, Dianne Salcedo, Garth Shaneyfelt, Dave Small, Paul Somers, Samantha Stoddard, Heather Stone, Craig Twohey, Rich Valcourt, Joelle Vautour, Ed Vitone, and Paul Wanta, for helping to host, lead, and coordinate Mount Grace events

Lucy Allen, Paula Boyle, Steve Brewer, Clare Green, Ann Meilus, Sue Muznicki, Julie Rawson, Rachel Scherer, Linda Tomasi, and Stephanie Young for sharing their stories, time, and expertise to help make our Barre Storytelling Evening a success!

Fred Aldrich, Vahe and Annie Bedian, Jackie Beebe, David Brule, Rob Fletcher and Laura Herbert, Rachel Lee, Al MacDonald, Lynne Manring, Nick Vernotico, and Jerry Wagener for volunteering to assist our Stewardship Program

Kate Collins and George Northrop, Burt Gould, Bob Jennings, Al Rose, and Eric White, for assisting with our farmland inventory work

Thanks to Dean's Beans for being the lead sponsor of the Party in the Hollow and to the Montague Book Mill, Booska's Flooring, the Five Eyed Fox, the Second Street Café, Simon's Stamps, Adams Farm, Charon Art Visionary Tattoo, the Green Fields Market, Sam's Outdoor Outfitters, and Crestview Liquors for sponsoring the Party in the Hollow and the 2017 Skyfields Campout!

Congratulations to Anne Cervantes on her new position!

Tents wanted!



Mount Grace is seeking donations of tents and camping gear in good condition to get ready for:

The 2017 Skyfields Campout

This year's event, part of the Great American Backyard Campout, is subtitled "Camping 101" and aims to introduce new campers to the joys, and basic techniques, of camping. If you have tents, flashlights, lamps, coolers, camping tools, or other gear that you can donate, please contact Katy Ziemplak 978-248-2055 x28 or outreach_american@mountgrace.org.

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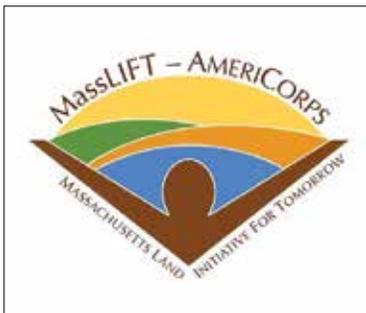
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Mount Grace created MassLIFT nearly eight years ago as a local pilot program with four Commonwealth Corps members. Since those early days, we have successfully scaled MassLIFT to support 20 partners annually across Massachusetts with 36 AmeriCorps members serving in 2016.



...is becoming...



To compete for AmeriCorps funding, MassLIFT must continue to grow. **Our strategy is to spin-off MassLIFT and launch an independent nonprofit called TerraCorps** that can focus all its resources on its community service mission. Mount Grace will be TerraCorps' fiscal sponsor through 2018, at which point the two organizations will separate.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with TerraCorps as a host site and partner for many years to come.