

SUMMER CAMP AT WENDEMUTH MEADOW

By Reshma Patel

The E.-T.E.A.M. summer camp was a six-week program run by the North Brookfield Youth Center and North Brookfield Public Schools. Tuesday and Thursday afternoons the students spent at Wendemuth Meadow. The summer program received funding support from the North Brookfield Local Cultural Council, 21st CCLC e³ ASOST grants, and MassLIFT Americorps program.

It seems fitting that my service-year ended at Wendemuth because it began there with the Friends of Wendemuth dinner last September. I feel fortunate to have experienced each of the changes the seasons bring to the Preserve.

Tuesdays and Thursdays came to be the most exhausting, yet most rewarding days of my summer. The 6-week camp consisted of several learning topics including forestry, agriculture, wildlife, and birding. One of the most important topics was the general history of Wendemuth and the Town Forest. The first week we explored the perimeter trail, experiencing the barn, stone walls, and hay fields. Plus, the quick recovery from the prescribed burn was clearly evident. In addition to the programs described below, we are grateful to Janine Drake, Devon Jurczyk, and Ross Hubacz for sharing their knowledge with the campers.

Farming was a topic that interested the kids. Ralph Buzzell came with his nephew, Sam, and informed the kids about farming techniques throughout history. He spoke about how dairy farming has changed from hand milking cows to a milking machine. Loose hay was pitched from the ground into hay lofts and now balers make round or square hay bales. Sam brought his work experience from Old Sturbridge Village and a few old farming implements, including pitchfork and scythe. Ralph took the campers on a hay ride through the fields.

Ann Hicks introduced the kids to the birds of Wendemuth by playing songs of bobolink, song swallow, red-winged blackbird and kestrel. We then took a silent walk listening for bird songs along the way. The kids could identify the song of a song-swallow and see multiple red-winged blackbirds and bluebirds. One group was lucky enough to hear and see a kestrel chiding us for coming too close to its nest.

We finished off our activities about birds with Tom Ricardi and his Birds of Prey program. He brought in non-releasable educational animals to teach the kids about wildlife rehabilitation and the impending dangers of habitat loss and poaching. After his presentation the kids were given nothing but their imaginations to create giant birds' nests using sticks collected at the school and



hay from the hay fields. Each camper got to test out their nests for comfort.

My favorite part of the camp was teaching the kids about wildlife. We spent one day making plaster paw prints to teach the kids about tracking and animal gaits. The kids got to walk like their favorite animals. The meadow was soon filled with tigers, snapping turtles, kangaroos, birds, and elephants. We did micro-investigations to see the differences in insect activity from various areas of the meadow and we culminated the wildlife section with a presentation from the Creature Teachers. They brought in educational animals to show the kids similar species to those found in the meadows. The tarantula they brought was a fun way to get kids that were originally scared of spiders engaged and open to the idea of spiders as an important aspect of the environment. We also talked about skunks, ferrets (and their relation to weasels), sugar gliders (and their relation to flying squirrels), and bearded dragons and snakes (and their relationships to other reptiles and amphibians that may be found in the meadow).

Bob and Sue LaFlamme taught the kids about orienteering providing the kids with the skills to complete a geocaching challenge at the school. Sherry Peterson helped the kids develop their creative writing styles, and to present and express the ideas and activities they came across during their time at the meadows.

The weeks of summer camp culminated with Exhibition Day where the kids presented the information they learned to community members. It was great to see how the kids were able to express the importance of Wendemuth Meadow and its natural resources to their family members, friends and community members that attended. ■

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



The East Quabbin Land Trust has helped conserve nearly 5,000 acres since its founding in 1994. Conserving that many acres is possible for many reasons: 1) a natural and historic landscape is worth conserving for us and the future, 2) landowners want to see their fields, farms and woods stay as open spaces into the future, 3) conservation funding is available from community members, foundations, and municipal and state government, and 4) community members volunteer their time engaging with their neighbors and guiding the work of the East Quabbin Land Trust. Without these volunteers, there would not be an effective program of land conservation and stewardship in our region of central Massachusetts.

It's my pleasure to work with and take guidance from these volunteers. Our programs are richer, more dynamic and better attuned to community goals because of their involvement. The board of directors is the core group of volunteers, and our land, stewardship, finance, personnel and advancement committees support the board of directors. As with all non-profits, the board of directors' primary responsibilities revolve around the strategic direction of our programming, and financial management and accountability of our funds.

Today, the East Quabbin Land Trust is formally recognizing our **Board Emeritus**, *those members of our communities who retired from their board positions but are still actively engaged with the work of the East Quabbin Land Trust through participation on one or more of our committees.* We are pleased to announce the inaugural group of **Board Emeritus** members:

Terry Briggs, attorney at Bowditch and Dewey
 Chris Buelow, restoration ecologist for the Mass.
 Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
 Lucinda Childs, retired draftsman

Many people served on the board of directors over the years and then moved onto other projects and focus areas. We are grateful for their years of service: Lucy Allen, Ellen Anderson, Jason Benoit, Donald Boothman (dec.), Tom Bovenzi, Jack Campbell, Paul Carroll (dec.), Bill Cole, Erik Fleming, Warren Johnson, Lee McLaughlin, Robert Paquet, Jeff Schaff, Genevieve Stillman, Stephen Taylor, Huck Truesdell, Ken Wolanin, and Magi Durham Ziff (dec.). If you see any of these people around town, please thank them for being part of our natural lands legacy in central Massachusetts.

THE EAST QUABBIN LAND TRUST

works to foster the sustainable use of our natural and historic resources for the benefit of all generations through the conservation and stewardship of the farmlands, woodlands and waters in our region of Massachusetts.

As a non-profit organization the East Quabbin Land Trust envisions a regional community that continues to care for its natural environment and supports a sustainable local economy, ensuring a high quality of life for generations to come.

We welcome your thoughts, articles, and photographs on events in our area. For more information about the land trust, to become a member, or request a change of address, please contact us at:

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 413-477-8229 (tel & fax)
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Visit our website at www.EQLT.org
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CLAUDIA & DAVID BROSCART: Running for Health

By Cynthia Henshaw

The view from the back porch at the Broschart's in West Brookfield looks westerly over a large wetland. As the sun was setting I could make out the curve of Lake Wickaboag in the distance, past the line of trees marking the back boundary. One of those trees was struck by lightning a couple years ago – it is still standing with its branches exposed, bark missing. Claudia commented that “The tree is filled with character, all craggy and gnarled.”

We started our visit talking about how nature has impacted them both. She recalled a time when the bald eagle circled overhead before soaring back towards the lake, the peacefulness of the area. Claudia is very happy living here, this is a respite from crowded work days. Now that she's retired from being a manager at a large insurance company, Claudia appreciates, more than ever, having a safe place to be at home with great neighbors and sidewalks for running or walking.

Dave is the one who does much of the outside work. Fortunately, when they bought the house in the late 90s the yard was a blank slate. Dave's attention to detail is clear as you cross the decorative entrance pavers, enjoy the screened-in porch and absorb the beautiful plantings. Dave, a financial analyst at Saint-Gobain, gains new perspectives working outside, pruning trees or designing the next project.

Getting exercise is another critical activity for both Claudia and Dave. Maintaining good health is number one for them both. “The running is hard. But once you're 10 minutes into your run, you begin to feel better, and remember why you're out there.”

“The Station Loop Ramble is a difficult course,” said Dave. “This is my marathon, the race that I work hard to prepare for. Climbing up to the top of the ridge on Unitas Road is challenging.” Dave has run in the Station Loop Ramble each year, and introduced Claudia and other friends to it over the years. This year several of Claudia's nieces and their kids ran. “We like the race so much that, each year, we'll bring more people.”

Dave and Claudia first became members of the East Quabbin Land Trust after discovering Mandell Hill on a bike ride. Winding up Barre Road towards Hardwick center is one of Dave's favorite hills. The

parking area and signage beckoned. Ultimately, they stopped and wandered around.

Claudia started running about three years ago after finishing up treatment for cancer. The chemotherapy and radiation left her weak. Before getting cancer she was very healthy, so the transformation was dramatic. Claudia started out walking. As she felt better she'd mostly walk, but run a bit too, and as she got stronger she ran more and walked less. Her goal is to run around Lake Wickaboag. It's 5.2 miles, so a long way, but something that she's working towards. “It's not easy, but I can do it. I'm a competitive person, so need to keep my bones and muscles healthy as I get older.”

Dave started exercising to get into shape. He can spin, row, bike and use the treadmill every morning as he heads down into their basement to work out. His workouts average forty-five minutes each morning before breakfast and then heading off to work. Dave likes running in races like the Station Loop Ramble because it's a chance to be social and meet other people interested in running and staying fit. Since he started exercising regularly about five years ago, Dave has lost 80 pounds. While running isn't his favorite activity, he knows it will make him feel better so he powers through.

Claudia and Dave are inspiring. Their commitment to being healthy – for themselves and each other – means that regular exercise and sharing their passions is part of their daily routines. We're thrilled that they run the Station Loop Ramble and encourage others to participate too! ■



Claudia finishing the 5k run.

FIFTH ANNUAL STATION LOOP RAMBLE - October 9, 2016

The mist and rain didn't bother the runners! In fact the course record was broken again this year at 28 minutes and 53 seconds. The morning kicked off with a Kid's One-Mile run, followed by the 5-Mile Classic and 5K Run/Walk. Each race incorporated a section of the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Hardwick. The races started and finished at the former New Braintree train station site at the intersection of Hardwick and West Roads.

***Please join us at the race next year on October 8, 2017!
Come cheer on the runners even if you don't want to run yourself.***



We appreciate donations from the following businesses for runner awards:
Barre Mill Restaurant, South Barre
Big Y, Ware
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Ragged Hill Orchard, West Brookfield
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Webb's Heirloom Garlic, Hardwick
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*Please support these businesses and
thank them for underwriting the Station Loop Ramble!*

PLANNING TO MAKE GIFTS TO EQLT

By Richard Cavanaugh

Support for the East Quabbin Land Trust takes many shapes. There are hardy volunteers who get out and help clear land, maintain trails, and otherwise steward properties on behalf of EQLT. Some contribute their time and expertise to help provide classes and other programs. Others donate money to the cause. Those who contribute financially to tax-exempt organizations like EQLT know that our tax code encourages charitable giving by providing deductions for charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Estate and gift tax deductions offer the charitably-inclined a variety of ways to benefit their favorite charities often with considerable benefit to themselves and their families.

Taking advantage of these various forms of income, estate, and gift tax deductions involves some planning. There are planned gifts that can be made during the lifetime of the donor and those that can be made after the lifetime of the donor. Here are just some examples:

Gifts from your Will or as an Insurance Beneficiary

When people hear about planned giving, more often than not, their thoughts turn to death. That's because the most common form of planned giving is to name a charitable organization in a will or trust. It's a simple and straightforward way to contribute to your favorite group while protecting your current financial needs. It's also relatively easy for you to name a charity, like the East Quabbin Land Trust, as a beneficiary during the preparation of a will or drafting a codicil that amends the will. Another simple way to support a charity is to change your insurance policy beneficiary to the charity of your choice. A bonus is that you can change your mind about giving in these ways should your personal or financial circumstances change.

Gifts from Retirement Accounts

Current law requires that people take minimum distributions starting at age 70½. If you don't need the full distribution amount to meet expenses, then consider making a transfer directly from the retirement account to a tax-exempt organization like the East Quabbin Land Trust. The contribution will count towards the required minimum distribution, will not be taxed as income, and can give you an income tax deduction. This can be an attractive alternative in a number of circumstances, one of them being when the donor doesn't itemize deductions. A few East Quabbin Land Trust members make these gifts totalling over \$10,000 annually - a significant

amount for the organization with huge benefits for the donors. There can also be compelling estate tax reasons to leave an IRA, compared to other types of assets, to charity.

Gifts that Provide Income to the Donor

By using a charitable gift annuity, you can make a gift to a charity and receive annuity income in exchange. This can allow a donor to give low-yield securities to a charity, increase their income, and diversify their portfolio. If, however, appreciated property is donated as a charitable gift annuity, a portion of the gain must be accounted for over the life of the annuity.

Gifts of Land or a Conservation Restriction

A gift of real estate or a conservation restriction on land can have a tremendous impact on your federal, state and local taxes for the year of the gift. The donation can be made outright during your lifetime, in your will, as a retained life estate, or through a variety of various annuity or trust agreements. At East Quabbin Land Trust, we are available to work with you, your family and other advisors to determine the best approach.



Gifts of Assets that Have Increased in Value

Current tax law requires payment of tax on any gain in the value of an asset when it's sold. That means that selling a painting, car or stocks may have significant impact on your yearly income tax liability. However, if instead you donated that item to a charity, then it's likely that the full value of the gift can be deducted from your federal and state income taxes. The exact tax benefits need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

East Quabbin Land Trust's supporters are prone to think ahead. Why else would they be part of an organization whose vision statement includes ensuring a high quality of life in this region for generations to come? East Quabbin Land Trust's responsibilities to protect and care for our natural resources will last beyond this generation, and so can your involvement.

Please feel free to contact me, Richard Cavanaugh, by email at rcavanaugh@eqlt.org or phone at (413) 477-8229. I am glad to also assist you and your financial and estate planning professionals to put plans in place to preserve the benefits of those assets for you and your family, while benefiting generations to come. ■

MOB GRAZING

By Cynthia Henshaw

I grew up in the city, and didn't really know how food was grown. The closest I got was picking beans and zucchini at my grandmother's when we visited in August. Working at the East Quabbin Land Trust has exposed me to so many people who care deeply about the land and how we grow the food we eat.

Just a couple weeks ago at a conference focusing on the intersection of agriculture and conservation, "mob grazing" was introduced as the most productive animal grazing strategy. Not only do the animals get the nutrition they need, but more carbon is stored, rain water is slowed down lowering the chances of flooding and erosion, soil can be made and wildlife diversity increases. The key is to look at the plants, not the animals.

Mark Fellows, owner of Chase Hill Farm in Warwick, can show the results from years of mob grazing. For the Fellows' they came to mob grazing through trial and error. Over the thirty years of farming they made the switch to organic dairy and for the past decade+ make their own cheese. They own or have access to enough land close to their home so that they can manage the pastures optimally. Mark uses temporary fencing to set up long narrow strips in each pasture. A new strip is opened up each day, and the cattle are moved forward and excluded from the prior day's strip.

In this way the "mob" keeps moving over the pasture. Each day the cattle graze and trample a new strip. The grazed grass is then given time to recover. The length of recovery depends on how well the grass rebounds – time of season and rainfall heavily impact this timing. Early in the growing season that strip of grass might be ready for re-grazing in three weeks. Later in the summer it could be six weeks or more. Mob grazing requires daily attention to the pasture grasses to know when an area is ready for re-grazing.

I tend to think of soil as pretty static, except when a big rain storm or strong wind is moving the soil. But many people at the conference, including Abe Collins, a farmer and educator from Vermont, are emphatic that we can grow deep, rich soils. Mob grazing of tall grasses is essential. Abe's focus on growing more soil ultimately results in producing more food, but it's the real impact on changing the water cycle that stirs him up. As the tall grass is trampled by cattle, much will decompose, providing nutrients for the plants, bacteria

and fungus living in the soil. Organic matter, basically carbon, is really good at holding onto water. Soils with higher organic matter allow more water infiltration (rather than run-off), increasing ground water supplies and reducing flooding events. The grasses have deeper roots and are less susceptible to droughts.

Did you know that there is twice the amount of carbon in worldwide soils as in trees and the atmosphere? Yeah, neither did I. But according to Serita Frey, a scientist from the University of New Hampshire



Devon mother and calf at Mandell Hill in Hardwick

focused on soil microbes and fungus, soil as a carbon sink should be part of the climate change discussion. Unfortunately, we've lost about 50% of the original amount of soil carbon in the last half century because of our agricultural practices, primarily in the Midwest. The good news is that it is possible to increase the amount of soil carbon, by increasing the amount of plant litter (think trampling grasses by animals).

By leaving more organic material on top of the soil, the microbes are being fed. That's important because the microbes get to work breaking down the plant litter by breaking it up and leaving the nutrients in a state more easily used by other microbes, fungus or plants. When the amount of plant litter exceeds what's eaten then the overall amount of soil carbon increases.

Typical soils of the northeast are coarse textured (more sand, than silt or clay) and rocky. Those conditions make it harder to increase soil carbon, but not impossible. Our soils do have plenty of water and essential micronutrients. With care, we can build soil, capture more carbon and increase the wildlife diversity of the fields. Mob grazing can build soil.

The East Quabbin Land Trust leases its fields to local farmers raising hay, pork and beef. Building soil or using mob grazing isn't a requirement for these farmers, but we do encourage best management practices and organic growing methods when possible. Sharing this information about the importance of building soil and the benefits of mob grazing with our lease farmers and members is a critical piece of meeting our mission and vision. We encourage farmers to incorporate the practices of mob grazing when possible to bring about the many benefits of building soil, capturing carbon, retaining water and increasing biodiversity. ■

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**GETTING
OUTDOORS
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***Giving Tuesday is coming on November 29th. Help us reach our goal:
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UPCOMING EVENTS...

NOVEMBER...

Sunday, November 6th, 2 PM

Hiking the Ware River Loop Trail, off Maple Lane, Wheelwright: Come walk this short loop trail that gives visitors the opportunity to stroll along the banks of the Ware River. This trail segment connects with the Mass Central Rail Trail for a longer hike with very little change in grade.

Saturday, November 12th, 9:30 AM

Post-harvest walk, Hall and Thayer Road intersection, Hardwick: A recent timber sale on this privately-owned conservation land will highlight the regeneration goals and strategies to improve tree quality and health over time, while protecting the natural resources. Join the landowner and forester on this walk. Registration is requested.

DECEMBER...

Friday, December 9th, 5 PM - 7 PM

Annual Holiday Open House, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick: Join your friends and neighbors for holiday cheer at our holiday open house. Bring a snack or dessert to share.

SAVE THE DATE...

Saturday, April 29th

Sixteenth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, at Eagle Hill School, Petersham Road, Hardwick: This is our signature fundraising event with a silent auction that benefits more land conservation and stewardship in the East Quabbin region.

