

AMERICAN CANOPY, by Eric Rutkow: A Review

By Cynthia Henshaw

European settlement of the North American continent began four centuries ago. Before then explorers and traders had ventured west and brought back tales of endless forests sparking the imaginations of many wanting a change of circumstance and economic opportunity in the New World. In *American Canopy*, Eric Rutkow takes his readers from the reign of James I, the newly crowned king of England and the first settlements, cider and oranges, to many important figures including Marsh, Roosevelt, Muir and Pinchot, ending with a brief glimpse of the importance of American trees on climate change.

At our book discussion in February, a dozen people shared their thoughts, ideas and questions about the history described in *American Canopy*. For many, looking at American history from the time European colonization through the lens of our trees (and how their abundance impacted commerce) was a novel approach. *American Canopy* didn't meet expectations of all readers. For instance, the New England forest included at least three major forest types, and instead Mr. Rutkow describes a monoculture of white pines. Others pointed out that the story ignores the significant impact that native Americans had on the woods. Diving further into topics such as the evolution of forestry on this continent would be interesting. Overall, much was learned and people were pleased to read *American Canopy*. Some plan to follow up with other reading!

Here are a few highlights that I gathered from the book: In the early 1600s, England was trying to keep up with Spain and Portugal, who already had a boon from their overseas exploration since Christopher Columbus's travels. Richard Hakluyt, a geographer and archdeacon at Westminster Abbey, believed that expansion and permanent settlements in the new lands over the seas were vital to England's future. In particular, having access to the trees, for fuel and lumber, were Hakluyt's principle goals for settlement, and the trees would guarantee that the colonial venture would succeed financially. "A foothold in tree-rich North America

would shore up the Royal Navy's greatest vulnerability and seemingly do so at little cost." The quality and quantity of white pines were ideal for ship masts, a critical need for the English navy. In 1620 the first settlement happened in New England, with a principle goal of sending wood back home.

Hard cider was a prized drink in colonial times. "Strong drafts were often safer than drinking water, which could be unpalatable and polluted". In 1767, the average New England family consumed thirty-five gallons of cider per person annually. At this time apple orchards were really cider orchards, and possession of an orchard indicated that land was being settled and productively used. John Chapman, a.k.a. Johnny Appleseed, headed west from Massachusetts and landed on the western frontier which is now western Pennsylvania and Ohio at the turn of the 18th century. He brought apple seeds and planted orchards wherever he went. Though basically nomadic throughout his life, Johnny Appleseed accumulated seven hundred acres spread across more than twenty properties in the Old Northwest because of his prodigious planting of apple seeds.

George Perkins Marsh was an author and politician in the mid-1800s. With publication of *Man and Nature* in 1864 Mr. Marsh promoted the idea that human development came with the responsibility to the natural environment. He detailed an understanding that "deforestation meant not only the elimination of trees, but the alteration of entire ecosystems" and that "to remove trees risked permanently degrading the land, such that nature alone could not ameliorate the problem." These are some of the earliest written words that support the conservation movement that began towards the end of the century, also supported by transcendentalism, the parks movement, and the fight to save big trees.

Our trees were not all about commerce. Some were symbols of friendship. The flowering cherry trees enjoyed around the tidal basin in Washington D.C. were first planted as a gift of friendship from Japan to strengthen tense bilateral relations.

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MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



Conserving the land of our region continues to be at the core of the East Quabbin Land Trusts work within our communities! Last fall we let you know about two farmland efforts underway. Here’s an update on our progress:

The farm at 1241 West Road in New Braintree is now called the Waugh Farm. Ray Waugh purchased the farmhouse, barn and 50 acres on the west side of the road. If you’ve been past, surely you’ve noticed some changes with lights draped along the fencing during the winter months and more recent clearing of trees and brush from the road-side wall. There’s a bunch of kids with their mothers (the four-footed goat-kind) out behind the barn enjoying open pasture.

At their January meeting, the decision-making committee for the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program voted to approve the purchase of the APR on the east side of West Road. The APR will cover almost 100 acres; a perimeter survey will let us know exactly how much land is included. We’re waiting for the appraisal to be formally reviewed before getting an offer to purchase from the APR program. Things are looking good to permanently protect those 100+/- acres before year-end.

The process in permanently conserving the former Gross family farm on East Street in Petersham is nearly complete. The final conservation restriction language is being reviewed by the state’s attorney, surveying for the residential and barn exclusion areas is underway, and we continue raising funds for the Town’s matching portion of the Mass. L.A.N.D grant funding the purchase. We collaborated with the Petersham Conservation Commission on a farm family search process. A difficult choice was made after receiving three qualified proposals that included combinations of livestock grazing, intensive vegetable production, greenhouses, fruit and nut orchards, and hay production. After the Town of Petersham purchases the conservation restriction, we will sell the land to Rice’s Roots Farm. Look for more details in our summer newsletter.

Please join us for a barn dance at the former Gross Farm on May 21st. This fun evening, with live music and dance calls, food and drinks will raise funds to ensure the long-term conservation of the farm is a reality. Hope to see you there! ■

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:

East Quabbin Land Trust
 P.O. Box 5, 120 Ridge Road
 Hardwick, MA 01037-0005
 413-477-8229 (tel & fax)
 email: EQLT@comcast.net

Visit our website at www.EQLT.org
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INTRODUCING RICHARD CAVANAUGH



Rich Cavanaugh was recently hired as a part-time Development Manager at EQLT

As part of its long-term plan for land protection and stewardship and to ensure its ongoing financial health, EQLT has hired a Development Manager to help with fundraising and community outreach. His name is Richard Cavanaugh. Rich has over thirty years' experience raising money for a variety of causes, and as an attorney, has also served on the boards of directors and as counsel for a number of human service and cultural non-profit organizations.

Rich comes to the East Quabbin region from Lowell, MA by way of The Farm School, Inc. in Athol. He was raised in Littleton, MA, and is a graduate of Boston College and Boston College Law School. Prior to law school, Rich served as a congressional press secretary and legislative assistant on agricultural issues. He also served on the staffs of a number of presidential, senatorial, and congressional campaigns. He began practicing law in 1991, and in 2000, helped form the law firm of Gallagher & Cavanaugh, LLP, located in Lowell, MA, where he continues to serve as a resource for the firm. In his over twenty years of litigation and trial practice in state and federal courts, he has handled a wide range of legal matters, including products and professional liability, construction, employment, motor vehicle, premises, environmental, liquor liability, and commercial disputes. He has argued appellate issues before the Massachusetts Appeals Court, and he counseled non-profit and for-profit corporations in a variety of business matters.

Before joining EQLT, Rich transitioned out of his full-time law practice to pursue his life-long interest in farming and completed the year-long Practical Farm Training Program at The Farm School in Orange, MA with his wife, Annie. "A few years ago, Annie approached me about how we might live on a small farmstead one day," explains Rich. "This was music to

my ears, considering that I had missed living in a rural place and had similar dreams. But I told her that we needed to make sure that we really enjoyed the work and knew more about it or we could get ourselves into some trouble. She took me up on the challenge and found the Farm School. After some careful planning, I was able to take a sabbatical from the law firm. Once Annie and I were outdoors and learning and working together, we didn't look back, and I've shifted my legal interests to land protection and am very excited to work for the EQLT."

Among other things, Rich will be helping to create and administer EQLT's development plan and annual fundraising goals and to help implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan. "Rich fully appreciates the challenges nonprofits face and enjoys waging the campaigns that allow them to succeed in their mission," says

EQLT's Executive Director, Cynthia Henshaw. "Rich is the right person to engage our strong, steady base of supporters to make sure that EQLT is supporting our communities and landowners for years to come."

Along with gearing up for the Spring Appeal, one of Rich's first responsibilities will be to spearhead a convenient, monthly giving program and to encourage people to join EQLT's Leadership Circle, an important step in ensuring EQLT's continued vitality and offerings. He will also help plan and coordinate EQLT events such as an upcoming barn dance at the Gross Farm in Petersham on May 21st, the Color Fest fundraiser at Wendemuth Meadows on June 11th, and the Annual Dinner on June 25th. Rich is also eager to help enhance EQLT's website and its social media presence to further encourage community access to and involvement with the full range of EQLT's activities.

"I am deeply honored and excited to begin work at the East Quabbin Land Trust," says Rich. "EQLT's staff, directors, and volunteers are very impressive, and I'm eager to learn from them and help raise the money they need to continue their good work. I firmly believe that land trusts will have an increasingly important role in protecting and managing land for the greater good. Also, from a selfish perspective, this position provides me great opportunity to get to know the people living and working in the communities that make up our new home."

You can contact Rich about your fundraising ideas or if you just want to welcome him to EQLT. He can be reached at rcavanaugh@EQLT.org or at the EQLT office (413) 477-8229. His home office number is (978) 724-3311. ■

REFLECTIONS on TREES in NEW ENGLAND

By Kayleigh Thomas

Kayleigh Thomas is a Junior at Ware High School and serves on the yearbook committee. She wants to pursue a career in photojournalism and spends her time photographing the picturesque landscapes across central Massachusetts. Several are featured on our Facebook page. The following photojournalism project was completed during her externship with the East Quabbin Land Trust this semester. Kayleigh's externship is a wonderful example of students applying their interests within the conservation field. - Reshma Patel, Service Learning Coordinator

History has proven: "Trees are what made America today" ~unknown.



It's very necessary to keep trees that have formed over centuries because they are what shape the country and the world we live in.

In New England there are a wide variety of trees with unique traits that help them adapt to our environment. The photo to the left includes an enormous tree that provides a nesting place for birds. With our help, such as the pictured bird feeder, the winter wildlife is able to procure much needed food resources. Birds mostly tend to rest in direct sunlight to keep warm, this exposes them to higher risks of predation.

In a peaceful country setting, one feature that stands out: the bare, leafless trees. In the winter season we observe many plants entering a dormant stage where growth and development temporarily stop to conserve energy while resources are scarce.

Trees will go bare because the sap and water cease moving from roots to leaves. When the amount of sunlight decreases in the autumn, the veins slowly close off. At the base of a leaf's stem, a separation layer forms and it falls off. ■



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These trees weren't the first ones shipped though. The initial shipment in 1909 hit an unforeseen snag. The original two thousand trees, being sent to First Lady Helen "Nellie" Taft, were deemed an unacceptable threat to national security; the trees had various species of scale insect pests, root gall worm and crown gall. Fortunately, the need to destroy the trees because of the potential for pest infestation was accepted without causing further damage to the U.S.-Japan relationship, and more trees were prepared and shipped in 1912. Today, only two of the original trees remain, while the others were replaced over the years as they died.

Eric Rutkow leaves readers with these final

thoughts: "As we rush headlong into the twenty-first century, the physicality of trees seems more vital than ever. The modern workplace and home are becoming increasingly antiseptic. Americans now spend their days staring into computer screens that receive information as if by magic. Daily life seems alarmingly virtual. Trees provide the antidote. The smell of pine needles, the crunch of autumn leaves, the roughness of bark are all reminders that we are a part of nature. Tree hugging, in its most literal sense, offers a reconnection with the physical world, the world of our forefathers. The forests and their trees are a sanctuary for the spirit. To enter them is to seek renewal." ■

PRESCRIBED BURNING at FROHLOFF FARM

By Sadie Simons

Sadie Simons is a senior at Ware High School and currently completing an externship with the East Quabbin Land Trust. Sadie is researching the benefits of a prescribed burn as part of our stewardship of Frohloff Farm to benefit natural community diversity and wildlife populations. In addition to writing this article, her externship responsibilities include 1) planning and running a volunteer workday to prepare for the prescribed burn, 2) writing a press release in advance of the burn to inform residents about the burn, and 3) creating a video and photo compilation of the prescribed burn. The following article shows the breadth of her research and explains the importance of carefully planned prescribed burning. – Reshma Patel, Service Learning Coordinator

The Frohloff Farm was acquired by the East Quabbin Land Trust in 2010. Important conservation values of the land include: restoration of an active farmstead, protection of the Ware River and Town drinking water well, enhancement of wildlife habitats and public access to the river and property. The Frohloff Farm is located on Church Street in Ware. The Town of Ware Conservation Commission holds a conservation restriction over most of the land. The Frohloff family, and generations of prior owners, raised livestock, grew vegetables and loved the land.

In order to enhance the land, the EQLT began an ambitious stewardship program several years ago. The land trust cleared the trees from the twenty acres between Church Street and the Ware River. Treatment for invasive plants, including buckthorn, multiflora rose and barberry are ongoing.

This spring we will be holding a **prescribed burn** on eight of the recently cleared acres. *“(P)rescribed fire is the knowledgeable and controlled application of fire to a specific land area to accomplish planned resource management objectives. These fires are managed in such a way as to minimize the emission of smoke and maximize the benefits to the site.”* (BCWildfire.com)

There are many benefits associated with prescribed burns including reducing the buildup of dangerous fuel responsible for wildfires, controlling disease and pathogens, improving wildlife habitats, preserving endangered plant and animal species, and maintaining ecosystems that are dependent on fire for their renewal. Also, the burn will cycle the nutrients through the soil and help with water flow through the ecosystem. The goals for this burn will result in enhanced biodiversity, (specifically, species and ecosystem diversity) and improved forest health.

The prescribed burn is designed to promote the growth and regeneration of pitch pine. There is a group of pitch pines between the rail trail and Ware River that were measured and tagged after the clearing at the Frohloff Farm. We hope more will sprout after the burn. Pitch pines grow to 100 feet tall, have needles bunched in

groups of threes, and can live for 200 years. Pitch pines are adapted to fire, with thick bark and cones that open more readily after a fire.

Pitch pines play an essential role – as a food source, resting and breeding location - for the survival of various species of moths and butterflies. According to the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan, 44 types of moths and butterflies are in great conservation need as their populations decline. These Lepidoptera enhance biodiversity in the area and are pollinators for many flowering plants. Pitch pine also serves as a food source to different forms of wildlife such as deer, rabbits, birds, and squirrels. To enhance the growth of pitch pine, the fire will clear the young white pine, birches and oaks that threaten to out-compete the pitch pine, and create a vast area for pitch pine seed dispersal.

Another species in need of protection is the wood turtle. The wood turtle is an endangered species that uses part of the Frohloff property near the Ware River. The wood turtle prefers a clear river with a slight current, and spends most of its time on shore. The burn can promote a safer habitat through the clearing of vegetation in order to increase the visibility of habitats and habitat markers. This helps prevent the accidental destruction of the wood turtle’s habitat by hikers, bicyclists, or tractor mowers. The cleared area from the burn will create a more accessible path to the Ware River for the turtles and help restore nesting areas along the shore. Several factors of the wood turtles life cycle make it important to aid in their survival: the turtles grow slowly, mature after 14 to 18 years, and have low reproductive success rates. Enhancing the area along the Ware River to ensure a safe and comfortable nesting area is beneficial for the preservation of wood turtles in the area.

The Frohloff Farm is open to passive recreational activities including hiking, walking, fishing, bird watching, photography, and bicycling. The public is encouraged to enjoy the preserve and experience the transformation of the farm through changes brought on by clearing vegetation, controlling invasive plant growth and completing a prescribed burn for habitat diversity. ■



Tagging a pitch pine seedling

CATCHING UP WITH RESHMA PATEL

On Wednesday afternoons the Hardwick youth center is full of enthusiastic kids between the ages of 5 and 12. I've been leading monthly activities focused around nature and the surrounding environment. Our first activity introduced the East Quabbin Land Trust and discussed how we all had a connection to conservation. We talked about living on a farm or raising livestock, hunting and fishing, and different kinds of recreational opportunities like trail walking, wildlife viewing, and tree identification walks. Every single person contributed a story about their experiences with nature. After sharing our stories we talked about how important it was to conserve the land.

In November we labeled trees down at the Gilbertville Fitness Trail with DCR Service Forester, Kate Marquis. The kids eagerly shared what they already knew about trees and loved nailing the tree tags. In December we made ornamental milkweed pod mice with pine cone ears and pine needle whiskers to appreciate our winter plant life and explore how we can use natural materials to decorate our homes and have fun. Some kids enjoyed it so much they made whole families of mice! In January we tried to forget about the cold and think about summer beach trips as we made seashell impressions in clay tiles after discussing some of the animals that live inside of shells and how they create their beautiful homes. Valentine's Day was literally 'for the birds' this year, at the youth center, when we made giant high energy birdseed valentine ornaments to help the birds survive the winter months. Hearing the kids talk about the importance of feeding birds in the winter was



Making birdseed ornaments at the Hardwick Youth Center

incredible. We even heard stories of bears that stumbled into backyards to take advantage of food resources that were left outside for local wildlife. Our latest activity was a celebration of spring where we made plaster paw print casts of common wildlife species. The similarities between coyote paw prints and pet dogs were not lost on their shrewd minds.

One teenager from the youth center has gotten very involved with the EQLT as a high school intern. Jason Boudreau is working to inspire Thursday's group of 12-16 year olds to get involved in health and fitness. He's planning and leading monthly activities to demonstrate the importance of fitness. Our first activity was a relay race that involved jumping jacks, hula hoops, jump rope, burpees, and army crawling. Jason arranged a day of Wii fitness to show how indoor activities can be amped up. His efforts will culminate in a community wide 30-Day Fitness Challenge at the Gilbertville Fitness Trail that begins in mid-April. Jason is revamping his resume and will lead a resume workshop for the teenagers at the youth center on Wednesday evenings. His internship also includes helping to maintain the Fitness Trail and attending EQLT volunteer workdays.

Participating with HYC shows me so much in terms of the energy and potential in our community. Working with the kids is fun and productive. Each week I look forward to their stories and spending time with them. Seeing the effort and time adult volunteers are committing to develop the community's future is inspirational. If you get a chance, go out and support your local youth center. They are an amazing community resource and well worth having around. ■

ARBOR DAY and TREE PLANTING

By Heather Scott, a senior at Ware High School completing her externship with EQLT

Arbor Day originated in Nebraska City, Nebraska on April 10th, 1872 as a thought from Julius Sterling Morton, a homestead farmer and Nebraska newspaper editor newly relocated from the east. Trees were largely missing from the plains; trees needed for homebuilding, fuel, shade and windbreak. Mr. Morton proposed planting trees for their many benefits. Arbor Day began with school children planting approximately 1 million trees on the first Arbor Day. In Nebraska, Arbor Day became a legal holiday in 1885 and the official date was set as April 22. Planting trees on Arbor Day became a patriotic duty. By the mid-1880s, this holiday had spread across America and was popular in

the public schools. President Theodore Roosevelt supported Arbor Day because tree planting represented both conservation and preservation efforts at the turn of the century. Today, it is still a celebrated holiday where many people, including some school systems, go out and plant trees to raise awareness of environmental issues. The National Arbor Day Foundation, one of the world's largest nonprofit organizations dedicated to planting trees, was founded in 1972 and has helped plant more than 20 million trees since the 1990s.

A red maple tree will be planted at the Ware High School on Friday, April 29, 2016 in celebration of Arbor Day. ■

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE EXPANDING

Behind the youth programs, stewardship practices, and active conservation initiatives of the East Quabbin Land Trust are dedicated supporters making it all possible. You make a difference in your community as a member of the Leadership Circle. Thank you for being part of a successful team.

Each member of the Leadership Circle supports the East Quabbin Land Trust through annual operating gifts totaling \$500 or more, whether in one gift or through monthly contributions. There are two designated levels of giving; as a Patron with cumulative contributions between \$500 and \$999 or Benefactor including gifts of \$1,000 or more each year. The Leadership Circle provides critical organizational funding to sustain the East Quabbin Land Trust's diverse program offerings.

During semi-annual meetings with the Executive Director and Board Members, there are opportunities to gain detailed insights about existing plans and to share your thoughts about conservation in our region. Touring the area, viewing the conservation

initiatives and stewardship in action, and speaking with the experts involved in each effort are key elements of each Leadership Circle gathering.

Our spring Leadership Circle gathering will include a tour of our preserves in the midst of wildlife habitat practices. We will examine the value of clearing large areas of trees and shrubs for the birds, mammals and insects that like young saplings for food and shelter. Intentionally burning the undergrowth and leaf litter can help remove some invasive plants while giving a pulse of nutrients to the plants that survive. Two preserves will undergo areas of burning this spring to promote wet meadow habitat and pitch pine regeneration. Our tour will experience the prescribed fire results first-hand.

Members of the Leadership Circle know that their contributions have a ripple effect throughout the East Quabbin region! Please join your friends and neighbors as a Leadership Circle member by making your pledge of support when the spring appeal arrives in your mailbox. ■



15th ANNUAL DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION

JOIN US FOR THE FUN!

Saturday, June 25th

Beginning at 5:30pm

at the

Cultural Center at Eagle Hill



If you want to become a sponsor, or have an item to donate for the silent auction, contact the office at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@EQLT.org. Auction items accepted until June 17th.



Your invitation will be arriving soon!

East Quabbin LAND TRUST



Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

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INTRODUCING RICHARD CAVANAUGH

SPRING 2016 | VOLUME 13 | ISSUE 2

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UPCOMING EVENTS...

MAY...

Saturday, May 14th, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Woods Walk with the Stutzmans, Poor Farm Road, Ware: Explore the woods with the Stutzmans as they share their story of stewarding the land they love. This walk is targeted to landowners interested in seeing how you can improve wild-life habitat by cutting trees, creating brush piles or special denning sites, and planting a variety of bushes and trees. Space is limited. RSVP required to Sarah at massconn@opacumlt.org.

Saturday, May 21st, 6:00 PM

Barn Dance FUNdraiser at the Gross Farm, East Street and Quaker Drive, Petersham: Join us for an evening of FUN as we celebrate conservation of the former Gross family farm! The evening will have food, drink, live musicians, and instructions for every dance. This is bound to be a foot-stomping good time. Caller is Dr. Mark Ledoux. All proceeds from the event will support conservation of the land.

JUNE...

Saturday, June 11th, ALL DAY

North Brookfield Art, Music and Color Fest, Time Out, 31 East Brookfield Road, North Brookfield: Join us for the second year of live music, lots of craft vendors, kid's games and activities, plus color throws for the whole family. Proceeds benefit on-going stewardship at Wendemuth Meadow and 2016 NBYC summer camp activities at Wendemuth. Don't miss the fun!

Saturday, June 25th, Beginning at 5:30 PM

Fifteenth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill, Hardwick: Your invitation will be arriving soon. Don't miss our gala dinner this year! If you have an high-quality item or service to donate, please contact Cynthia at chenshaw@EQLT.org. Thank you to our generous supporters for making this our best fundraiser each year!