

OPEN SPACE FOR RIDERS!

By Susannah Jones

After I had been established as a horse back rider for two years and having just acquired my first horse, my beloved five-year-old Morgan mare named Lucy, endless possibilities began to open up. I began to venture out from the comfort and safety of the fenced-in sand arena to the wilds of the trail, or the tiny rise of the yard in front of the barn. Trotting and then cantering up this tiny incline, with a saddle and then without was tremendous fun, and I wanted to do more of the same. My first real trail ride followed soon after and involved going out down the road to a hay field and from there turning into the woods on several different trails which led to various cornfields hidden like gems in the forest. It was thrilling and frightening at the same time, as Lucy had her own ideas about what we should do which sometimes involved running off in pursuit of grass, trying to eat leaves off the trees, or even attempting to rip corn stalks out of the ground to munch on. As I got older and more confident, I went off with a gaggle of friends and trotting and cantering to my heart's content around fields, reveling in the excitement and freedom of riding in such beautiful open spaces. After a few years the stable moved to a new location, this time with access to a beautiful sloping hay field with a track in the middle that led to a new source of wonder and fun: an abandoned railroad bed converted into a recreational trail. This opened up a treasure trove of new opportunities such as galloping or enjoying a leisurely jog through the woods without having to worry about tripping over stones or uneven ground. It was here that I learned to gallop, on the long, straight expanse of this beautiful stone-dust bed. The sloping field next to the barn also lent many opportunities for enjoyment, as I would canter up over and over again, usually bare-back, or I would bring a book and let my horse eat grass while I lay on her back and read. The open farmland and trails allowed me to explore a wonderful facet of riding, and also forged an amazing bond between Lucy and me.

Open space means many things to those who ride and love horses. Open space generally means pastureland where horses can be seen grazing, or hay is grown for animal consumption, or else hay and corn fields are there to ride around, and it even extends to places that one might not consider open, such as wooded trails or railroad beds. Any space that has been conserved and undeveloped can be considered open space. For me, seeing a beautiful hay field makes my stomach flutter and my heart pound as images of galloping across it at full speed flash through my mind. For my

mother, these spaces mean a nice place to walk safely without having to worry about cars or other motorized vehicles speeding by too close for comfort. For some, open space is a chance to get their performance horse out of the ring for some fun, because all work and no play makes Lightning a dull boy. For others the ability to have access to endless systems of trails, railroad beds, fields, and dirt roads means the ability to connect with friends (four-legged

and two-legged), enjoy nature, see wildlife up close (being on a horse is less scary to wildlife than being on a bicycle!), and see some of the most beautiful landscapes and scenery imaginable. It is so important to keep these places open, so that these wonderful opportunities are not lost to us, and so that we may keep on doing something we love, whether it is the thrill of speeding across a field, or strolling leisurely through the woods. To be able to ride and experience the open space around us is a vital component of life for many of us horse lovers and riders. I want to continue to enjoy and explore our local open space so that's why I support permanent land conservation. ■



Susannah Jones on her new horse Flower, enjoying open space!



STABLE TOUR AT MORNINGFIELD FARM

with Torrance Watkins and Erik Fleming

to benefit the East Quabbin Land Trust

Friday, July 29, 2011

6 to 8 PM

542 Greenwich Road, Hardwick

Come see Torrance Watkins' state-of-the-art 18-stall stable in action. At 7 PM Torrance will lead a lesson demonstration.

Tickets \$5. Reserve tickets at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org. Tickets also available at the door.

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



Volunteers for the East Quabbin Land Trust are tremendous! It is truly amazing to work with such a fabulous group of individuals committed to the future well being of our communities. People bring their skills, interests, passions and apply them to the vision of enhancing a broader community that cares about the natural environment and vibrant local economy. Our volunteers garden, stuff envelopes, serve on committees, cut brush and create educational materials, among many other tasks.

In some cases, volunteers learn new skills or tackle complex problems. Nowhere is this clearer than working on repairs to the Mass Central Rail Trail bridges. A civil engineer is guiding the process, but the nuts and bolts of repairing pilings, installing blocks, decking and railings is largely undertaken by our dedicated volunteers. The next step is to replace the existing wooden beams with steel beams to span the 36 feet from the lattice truss back to grade. Come-alongs were handy in replacing the rotting blocks, maybe a pulley system is essential to counterbalance the steel beams as they move into place?

In addition to adults, the number of young people volunteering increased this year, thanks to the Service Learning Program and Sarah Mildren, our first AmeriCorps volunteer. Youth completed a pond study at the Frohloff Farm, explored the vernal pool at Patrill Hollow Preserve, created a Food Web Quest at Mandell Hill, and built bird houses for various properties. These activities directly enhance the wildlife habitat and educational programs available for all visitors.

Stewardship of the East Quabbin Land Trust's 800+ acres of land has captured the interest of many volunteers. Jeff routinely "picks up" at Mandell Hill, cutting downed limbs, clearing the trail loop and picking up the roadside litter. This spring Neal and Will used leaf blowers to clear the trail loop at the Patrill Hollow Preserve. Rick installed several new EQLT property signs to help visitors locate the properties with trails. The rejuvenation of the Frohloff Farm was advanced by many, including Kristen, Dennis, Janice, Paul, Tim, Jim, Peter, Tom, Caren, Alfredo, Mike, Margarita, Fred, Mark and Ian.

Volunteers do a lot of excellent work. Much of it is hard work, but we have fun in the process! If you'd like to help with the stewardship or programs at the land trust, please let us know. We welcome your participation.■

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.

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DIANA WOOD: A Proud Supporter of EQLT

By Judith Jones

Diana Wood works part-time for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia in the Asian Studies Center of the University of Pittsburgh. She gives many reasons why she supports the East Quabbin Land Trust and land conservation. First and foremost is because her daughter, Cynthia, is the Executive Director. But, to hear her tell it, it's not the only reason. It has to do with the dedication of the board and our volunteer crews, the complexity of the deals we put together, and because of the success she sees, and the momentum that success engenders. It also has to do with a lifetime connection she has to a beautiful piece of family land, and personal experience that it takes effort rather than benign neglect to keep land open and conserved for future generations.

We began our conversation talking about Diana's love for a place that originally belonged to her grandfather in Sedgwick, Maine:

"It's a grand piece of land," Diana says, "with a woodlot, a coastal field and a beach. Since the 1990's I've been responsible for its stewardship. I've worked with a Maine State Forester designing a cutting plan to restore pastureland.

We're taking care of the apple trees and grafting to improve the orchard." It's a long-term commitment. In Maine, she contributes to the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Blue Hill Heritage Trust, both organizations that share a mission with the EQLT. She's also a member of the Small Woodlot Owners Association of Maine (SWOAM). Closer to home she is a member of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

From her own experience Diana says she can understand what it takes to be successful at land stewardship. She knows it is not easy, and she can appreciate the resource an organization like the Land Trust can offer individuals to help them do the right thing by their land.

Diana talks with Cynthia often, asking questions about the projects she's working on and she says, "I'm really amazed by the complexity of the deals you get into and the

different state organizations and other trusts you work with. Cynthia's leadership is impressive."

She also talked about her own experience working on a volunteer board. She was on the board of Chatham Baroque, which is an early music group. Diana says, "I remember it being really hard to get everyone to attend meetings and pitch in on all aspects of the work. With the EQLT I see a group of people putting significant effort into the organization and working together. That impressed me a lot, and made me want to step up to the plate and offer my financial support."

We talked about how she uses her retirement fund to support the charities important to her. Says Diana, "At age 70 ½ you must take annual required minimum distributions. For me, at this time I don't need it for expenses so it is relatively easy to give away some money I don't even have yet! The money must go directly from the investment source to the charitable organization. Each year I use \$9,000 to \$10,000 to support the EQLT and my college."



Diana Wood:

advocate and practitioner of good land stewardship

The project that really brought Diana on board with the East Quabbin Land Trust was the Frohloff Farm in Ware. Cynthia invited her to our "open barn" tour. She realized then that we had saved a local landmark that was important to the people of the region. Someone said to her: "I grew up walking past this land (and the farmer yelled at me), but now I can walk on the trails by the river."

"On top of that," she said, "here were all these volunteers who had cleaned out the barn, chopped down the weeds, and the board was all involved to make the land open. Now a farmer is going to farm it. It's unique. It's all impressive!"

POLLINATOR FRIENDLY HABITATS

by Caren Caljouw

During the month of June, thousands of activities took place across the United States and Canada to recognize the importance of pollinators to ecosystem health and agriculture. National Pollinator week was celebrated June 20 - 26, 2011. Before school let out in late June, Sarah Mildren and I spent a fun day with biology students and teachers at Quabbin Regional High School. Sarah gave lectures on the plight of pollinators and outlined steps to help them. We then visited the open space around the high school. The school has several interesting wetland, forest, and meadow habitats on



High school students cataloguing a variety of native plants along the beaver pond shore.

campus and we catalogued over 100 wild plants important to pollinators throughout the growing season. It was a very warm day, in the low 90's and I worried the heat and mosquitoes would diminish the enthusiasm of students. But I was proven wrong as their interest was piqued by an insect in flight or an unusual wildflower along our walk. We watched bumble bees as they hung upside down on the bell-shaped flowers of high-bush blueberry. The bees were vibrating their wing muscles and making a loud buzzing noise known as sonication which allows them to shake pollen grains from the flowers. As we walked along the edge of the shrub swamp, one student shouted, "Wow, what's that - a miniature bird?" "Nope", said another student as we watched a large moth buzzing and flitting in front of the blossoms of an arrow-wood shrub. "That's a hummingbird moth, I see them in our flower garden at home" he said. The hummingbird moth, also known as the clearwing moth, is not uncommon. But I always feel it's a special treat to see one. Unlike many other moths, this species flies during the day and looks like a miniature hummingbird as it hovers over a fragrant blossom with its long beak-like proboscis in search of nectar. Its wings make a soft buzzing sound and beat so swiftly you can barely see them.

Pollinators are vital to our way of life. Without pollinators we would not be eating beans, tomatoes, apples, pumpkins, and cranberries. We would also miss the showy blooms of sunflower, cardinal flower and many other cherished garden and wild flowers. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation reports that over 75% of the world's flowering plants rely on animal pollinators such as bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, beetles, flies, and other animals. Bees are our most important group of pollinators because they collect large amounts of pollen and nectar to feed their offspring and thus visit large numbers of flowering plants.

Traditionally, local farmers have relied upon the European honey bee to pollinate crops. Bee hives are often moved around the countryside by bee keepers to insure adequate pollination of seasonal crops.

Unfortunately, domesticated honey bees are experiencing dramatic declines and threatened by a combination of factors termed "Colony Collapse Disorder". While scientists can't pinpoint exactly what is killing domestic honey bees, they have found evidence of over 100

pesticides in their disease-susceptible colonial hives. The accidental introduction of mites and other diseases associated with the introduction of Asiatic honey bees also contributed to the swift decline of honey bees. Some of our native bees are also experiencing declines, such as the rusty patched

bumble bee - a species once common throughout the eastern United States. Researchers think that an exotic disease that spread from commercial bumble bee colonies has contributed to this particular bumble bee's decline.

While scientists work to solve the domestic honey bee crisis, we are fortunate that many of our native bees and butterflies are picking up the slack and assuming critical roles in pollination. EQLT's preserves contribute to the abundance of native pollinators by providing important nectar and pollen foraging habitat, larval host plant sites for butterflies and moths, and nest sites for bees. There are many things we can do to encourage bees and butterflies on our preserves.

As responsible land stewards, it's important to recognize existing pollinator foraging habitat and engage in land management practices that encourage floral blooms throughout the growing season

Article continued on page 7.



Teacher Becky Bottomley - during class field trips - pointing to black cherry fruit that was pollinated by native bees.

THE BUZZ ON NATIVE POLLINATORS

by Sarah Mildren

Here is a quick and dirty lesson on native pollinators, and what you can do to help them.

Who are the native pollinators? Bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, ants, beetles and hummingbirds.

What is so important about pollinators? These animals help carry out the process of pollination, which allows the fertilization of plants to take place. Plants are key to our survival because they provide us with certain resources that we depend on such as food, fibers, and medicine.

When do we need to start helping the pollinators? Now! There are many quick and easy things that we can do to help pollinator populations.

Where should we begin helping these creatures? Right in our own back yards!

Why should we help native pollinators? Many pollinator populations are declining, and since they are vital to our ecosystem, and provide us with valuable resources (including blueberries and strawberries) we need to ensure that they stick around.

How can we help native pollinators?

There are so many things that we can do to help save the pollinators, and they range from small scale to large scale projects. Here are a few suggestions on how we can help on an individual level:

Build a bee hotel: These hotels are fun and easy to make. All you have to do is take a handful of bamboo (or other hollow plants), cut them into pieces between 6-12 inches long, bundle them up and tie them together with a rope. Glue the group to a board or block the backside with wax. Hang these in an area that is partly sunny, and protected from the rain, such as underneath the sill of a roof, or on a shelf. Solitary bees will use these as their homes! Another method you can try is to take scrap blocks of wood, and drill several holes of different diameters into the block. The holes should be 3 to 6 inches deep. Hang the block in a similar location as bamboo hotels.

Make a butterfly puddle: This is another quick and easy project. Kids and butterfly lovers enjoy this, because it attracts beautiful butterflies. To make a butterfly puddle you first need some sort of shallow saucer preferably 16 inches or larger in di-

ameter. The saucers that come with clay pots are excellent for this project (inexpensive plastic versions of these work just as well). Fill the saucer with sand. You can add in a teaspoon or so of chicken manure or mushroom compost to make it extra attractive to the butterflies. Add water, mixing well, until the sand turns to mud. Place this puddle near your garden, or around plants that attract butterflies. Don't forget to add water when it starts to dry out!

Plant a pollinator garden: You can find lots of detailed information on how to do this project online. Here is one great website: <http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/pollinatorpages/YourHelp.html>. The ecoregional planting guides are especially helpful. When planting your pollinator garden you want to include a selection of plants that will bloom throughout the season to ensure that the pollinators that are attracted stick around. You also want to include plants for nectar and pollen; as well as larval food sources. Here are a couple ideas of plants to get you started:



Native milkweed is a high-quality nectar producer important to honey bees and many native pollinators. Photo by Raul LaBorde.

Early bloomers: Wild Columbine and Solomon's Seal which are good sources of nectar and pollen; and Violets which

are also a larval food source.

Mid Bloomers: Common Milkweed, Black-eyed Susan and Orange Butterfly Weed all serve as good sources of nectar and pollen, as well as larval host plants for butterflies.

Late Bloomers: Joe-Pye Weed, Showy Goldenrod and New England Asters as nectar, pollen, and larval food sources for butterflies and moths.

If you have questions about the projects listed, feel free to contact me: servicelearning@eqlt.org. ■

SEEKING FURNITURE DONATIONS

The land trust Conference Room is finally getting a face lift thanks to John and Linda Tomasi. We are in dire need of comfortable, contemporary or traditional furniture in good condition: couches, chairs, tables, lamps and rugs.

Donations wanted ASAP, no later than August 1.
Contact John and Linda at 413-477-8355 or email jondadesign@earthlink.net.

CONSERVATION OF THE FROHLOFF FARM DONE!

The Frohloff Farm joins other critical properties in the region as officially conserved and open to the public for passive recreation. "This is a great outcome for the land, the land trust and the Town of Ware," stated Martha Klassanos, President of EQLT. "Not only is there a new open space recreation area, but over 40% of the Town's water supply watershed along the Ware River is protected from possible future contamination."

The East Quabbin Land Trust owns and stewards the property, and the Ware Conservation Commission holds the conservation restriction ensuring future conservation of the land. In total 82 acres, on both sides of Upper Church Street are conserved. The west side is mostly woods, old pasture re-grown into white pine and a combination of pine and mixed hardwoods. The east side of Upper Church Street was also pasture and orchard, abandoned more recently so the trees are not as big. The big red barn is on a four acre area excluded from the conservation restriction, allowing the land trust and our farming partner(s) the room to add buildings as necessary for future viable farming business.

Adding the area in the Frohloff Farm to the Lincoln Farm (conserved in 2009) now over a mile along the west bank of the Ware River is permanently protected from residential development. This is good news for the fresh-water mussels and rare dragonflies that need the river to survive. High quality water, especially without silt and sand in the water column, is critical for mussels because they filter the water to find algae and other microscopic organisms to eat. Run-off from lawns and roads adds herbicides, pesticides, oil and gasoline that kills or contaminates the plants and animals in the river corridor.

The fishing along this stretch of the Ware River is good. Some days there are four or five vehicles parked along Upper Church Street. Conservation of the Frohloff Farm will help keep it that way! Some of the wildlife habitat practices that are planned in the coming years will improve walking access along the river.



Rolling out fabric to protect the newly planted pumpkins and squash.

A dedicated core of volunteers is developing around the Frohloff Farm and will help further our vision to open the property for passive recreation and local food production. Twenty people, young and old(er), came to help Margarita plant the pumpkins, squash, Indian corn and strawberries in early June. All the rain during June helped the plants get established. It will be exciting to watch the garden grow, and hopefully flourish this summer!

We are planning a Harvest Celebration on September 10th from noon to 4 p.m. Bring the whole family to pick a pumpkin



Indian corn being planted by young volunteers.

and stroll through the fields along the Story Walk down to the bluff along the Ware River. The rain date is September 17th. If you'd like to help with the planning or volunteer during the event we welcome your assistance. Please contact Cynthia at chenshaw@eqlt.org or 413-477-8229.

... POLLINATOR FRIENDLY HABITATS continued

and limit the use of pesticides within these areas. Preserves that support a variety of habitats and flowering native plants during the spring, summer and fall attract a greater number and diversity of bees and butterflies. In the springtime, our preserves are host to wild oats, columbine, crane's-bill geranium, cowslip, blueberries, shadbush, hobblebush, and many more flowering herbs, shrubs, and trees that attract pollinators. Blooms of milkweeds – common, poke, and swamp, jewelweed, wild bean, yellow indigo, swamp azalea, elderberry, sumac and winterberry attract many pollinators throughout mid summer. Great displays of asters, goldenrods, tall sunflower, cardinal flower, Joe-pye weed, and sweet pepperbush are visited by pollinators in late summer on our preserves. Non-native plants such as bush honeysuckle and autumn olive may attract bees and butterflies but they are quite invasive, flower only in springtime, and reduce the overall plant diversity of our preserves. Efforts are underway within our preserves to selectively control and remove invasive shrubs and vines so that we increase plant diversity and flowering throughout the growing season.

Many native plants are also important host plants for butterflies and moths providing sources of food during the larval growth stage. Many butterflies lay their eggs near or on larval food sources such as violets, milkweeds, and lupine. Many trees and shrubs including arrow-wood, maple-leaved viburnum, high-bush blueberry, scrub oak, spicebush, and sassafras are also important host plants for butterflies and moths and highlight the importance of maintaining viable populations of certain shrubs and trees in order

for lepidoptera to complete their life cycle.

Most of our native bees live in soil or wood, often using the burrows or cavities made by other animals. Native bees that live in soil include bumble, sweat, digger, and squash bees. Those living in wood include orchard, mason, leaf cutter, and carpenter bees. Bare soil areas associated with meadows, pastures, woodlands, river bluffs, and trails provide important habitat for many of the ground nesting bees. Old snags with beetle tunnels and holes provide habitat for leaf cutter and mason bees. Saving patches of elderberry, sumac and blackberry provide habitat for carpenter bees that nest in the soft pith of these plants. Bumble bees often nest in the small cavities abandoned by mice in grassy fields. Management practices such as periodic burning help maintain patches of bare soil important to bees and increase plant diversity in meadows and shrublands. Prescribed burning also reduces populations of parasitoids, such as the non-native tachinid fly, afflicting native pollinators.

Recently, we planted a small pollinator garden near the entrance to Frohloff Farm within an area formerly overrun by Oriental bittersweet. We are grateful to Lois Faye for donating the plugs for the garden. The plants include a variety of native wildflowers which will bloom throughout the growing season. Not only is the garden important to pollinators who visit the nearby farm fields, it will also provide a great educational stop along our soon-to-be trail system which will lead from farm to riverside bluff and meander through a variety of pollinator friendly habitats. ■

Stewardship Wish List

The East Quabbin Land Trust staff and volunteers work on a variety of stewardship projects including biological inventory and monitoring, construction of interpretive structures, invasive plant removal, vegetation maintenance, landscape restoration, and trail creation and maintenance. The following equipment would greatly help us get our job done. We welcome donations of any of the following equipment in good working condition. Please contact Caren at ccaljouw@eqlt.org or 413-477-8229 if you plan to make a donation. Thank you!

Large/Medium Sized Equipment

- DR Field Brush Mower
- Generator - gas or diesel powered
- Lawn Mower
- Leaf Blower
- Small Trailer for hauling equipment

Inventory and Monitoring Equipment

- Binoculars
- Brunton Clinometer
- Clip Boards
- Flagging and Wire Flags
- Forestry Weather Kit
- Meter Sticks
- 50 and 100-meter Survey Tapes

Safety Equipment

- Chain Saw Chaps
- Shin Guards
- Plastic Ear Muffs
- Orange Safety Vests
- Hard Hats

Outdoor and Woodworking Tools

- Garden Rakes
- Fire and McCleod Rakes
- Wire Rakes
- Grubbing Hoe
- Hand Saws: Bow, Wood, and Hack
- Drill and Bits – Battery Powered
- Machete and Case
- Mattocks
- Pulaski – Forester Axes
- Rock Bar
- Spade or Long Handled Digging Shovels
- Sledge Hammer
- Splitting Maul
- Storage Bins and Buckets
- Tool Box w/ hammers, pliers, screw drivers
- Watering Can
- Weed Wrench
- Wire Cutters
- Wheel Barrow and Garden Cart
- Winch/Come Along

Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

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Stable Tour Benefit

SUMMER 2011 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY...

Thursday, July 28, 6:30 PM

Site dedication for the Chris Ellison Memorial Birding Platform at Mandell Hill, Barre Road, Hardwick – We will be gathering at the site where a birding platform will be constructed to encourage and inspire birders and nature enthusiasts to get out and observe our surroundings. Chris Ellison loved to bird at Mandell Hill (among other places!) and the platform will be located to take advantage of the view east over the Ware River valley and across the grasslands on the ridge. There will be an opportunity to share any thoughts and remembrances of Chris on this one-year anniversary of his passing.

Friday, July 29, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Stable Tour at Morningfield Farm with Torrance Watkins and Erik Fleming, 542 Greenwich Road, Hardwick – This is your chance to explore the state-of-the-art eighteen stall stable and learn more about Event Competition from Torrance Watkins, a US Gold Olympian in Three-day Event Competition (1984) and the first woman inducted into the US Eventing Hall of Fame (2003). There will be a lesson demonstration by Torrance at 7 pm. Tickets are \$5 and all proceeds benefit the East Quabbin Land Trust. Please register by contacting the East Quabbin Land Trust at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org. Refreshments available.

AUGUST...

Friday and Saturday, August 19 and 20

Hardwick Community Fair, on The Common – Come join the East Quabbin Land Trust at the Hardwick Community Fair and learn what's new with the land trust, conservation and stewardship in our region. We look forward to greeting Fair-goers and supporters as we all support local enterprise and community.

SEPTEMBER...

Saturday, September 10, 12 PM to 4:00 PM

Harvest Celebration at the Frohloff Farm, 221 Church Street, Ware – Come celebrate the first growing season at the Frohloff Farm by picking a pumpkin and exploring the story walk that leads from the barn through the fields to the bluff over the Ware River. Rain date is Saturday, September 17th.