

HENRY'S GROVE: Newest EQLT Preserve

By Cynthia Henshaw

Driving along Lombard Road in Hubbardston houses are sprinkled on either side, but there is one stretch near the town line with Princeton that will remain woods. That's thanks to Judith Bothwell and Joyce Lofgren.

The 94 acres was in their family since the mid-50s. The land was a cut-over woodlot, but their father was interested in caring for the land with the long-term in mind. Judith and Joyce have fond memories of riding up to the woodlot on Sunday afternoons and planting trees. "We must've planted thousands of little conifer trees. Mostly red pines," said Judith and Joyce added: "Probably spruce too."

As the trees grew their father, Henry Howe, would trim them, helping to grow clear wood which is valuable for lumber. Mr. Howe was in the lumber business, so growing trees that might become lumber can partially explain his interest in the land. But just being outdoors was also important. Judith and Joyce remember family fishing, hiking and camping trips, too.

The woods road winds away westerly from Lombard Road towards the East Branch of the Ware River. The most recent timber sale on 30 acres happened in 2000, with an earlier cut a decade before. Poor markets for lower quality trees meant that a harvest scheduled for 2007 hasn't happened yet. These cuts removed the lowest quality trees, leaving the better trees to grow while opening space for young trees to start naturally. The Forest Stewardship Plan calls for a harvest over much of the property, with the timing to coincide with a good white pine seed year. That way there will be lots of new seeds to sprout.

At the moment the woods road has narrowed; young trees and shrubs are stretching into the trail bed, but you can still clearly see where to walk. Blueberry bushes are scattered along the way.

The western-most edge runs along the river. Here the neighboring properties include large grassy wetlands. The beavers like the spot. Also American bittern. The river and wetland is home to Blandings turtle, an endangered turtle in Massachusetts. Any future tree

cutting will take these special species into consideration.

This land is conserved in Henry Howe's honor; to remember his care and passion for the land, the trees and being outdoors. Henry's Grove is open to the public for non-motorized recreation. Ultimately, another trail segment will loop into the existing woods road, creating a figure eight shape expanding walking access on the land. The East Quabbin Land Trust needs to complete invasive plant control and recommended tree harvesting before installing two needed sections of bog bridges.

Conservation of the land was completed through the Quabbin Reservoir to

Wachusett Mountain Forest Legacy Program grant from the US Forest Service. Henry's Grove is one of thirty properties and over 3,000 acres permanently protected with a conservation restriction in this program. USFS funding covers a portion of the conservation restriction purchase price. Landowners make a gift or funding from other sources is sought for the remaining amount. In this case, Judith and Joyce generously donated the remaining value of the conservation restriction and donated the property to the East Quabbin Land Trust. In addition, they both contributed stewardship funds for signage and property improvements.

Joyce shared her feelings about the land. "Preserving the land honors our father's memory, and makes each of our families happy, to know it will be kept natural and available for wildlife, tree growth, enjoyment of nature and now part of the Quabbin to Wachusett corridor."

"It's almost like if you had a famous painting and you gave to a museum, and you'd know, there it is, that everyone can look at it if they want to. It just gives me such a comfortable feeling knowing that it's going to be the way my father, more or less, left it." Their generous gifts honor their father and his hope that the land could remain as a tree farm or preserve, but ultimately reflects their passion for the land and its importance to them, their families and their commitment to future generations. ■



MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



At the 15th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, I closed out my remarks about the work of the East Quabbin Land Trust with a poem by Robert Frost. This poem speaks to me because it acknowledges that though we may work separately on a day-to-day basis, we really are working together – for the good of our communities and families. Unfortunately the acoustics during the evening meant that not everyone could hear the poem as it was being read out loud. Please read it out loud to yourself or your family and enjoy the rich and meaningful words. We do work together, and in doing so make a difference in our futures.

The Tuft of Flowers, by Robert Frost

I went to turn the grass once after one
 Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.
 The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
 Before I came to view the leveled scene.
 I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
 I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.
 But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
 And I must be, as he had been, --- alone,
 "As all must be," I said within my heart,
 "Whether they work together or apart."
 But as I said it, swift there passed me by
 On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,
 Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night
 Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.
 And once I marked his flight go round and round,
 As where some flower lay withering on the ground.
 And then he flew as far as eye could see,
 And then on tremulous wing came back to me.
 I thought of questions that have no reply,
 And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;
 But he turned first, and led my eye to look
 At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,
 A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
 Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.
 The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
 By leaving them to flourish, not for us,
 Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
 But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.
 The butterfly and I had lit upon,
 Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,
 That made me hear the wakening birds around,
 And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,
 And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
 So that henceforth I worked no more alone;
 But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
 And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;
 And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
 With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.
 "Men work together," I told him from the heart,
 "Whether they work together or apart."

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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DAN EWALD: Making a Direct Impact

Like many people who are actively engaged in conservation – whether by work or passion – Dan Ewald cites early childhood experiences as being a critical driving force in his life. Dan was an outdoors kid; hiking, biking and fishing with his two brothers and others over the years. More recently, he's taken up skiing, hunting and long-distance cycling. "I grew up in Ashby, which is a rural community along the New Hampshire border, so had lots of chances to be in nature." He took advantage of those opportunities.

It was Dan's high school Naturalist & Field Ecology class that turned his academic interests towards his passions. They learned about wildlife tracking, with an eye towards various habitats and why animal tracks or sign might be found in certain areas. Dan commented that "This was my favorite class throughout high-school." Now, Dan is a Junior at Clark University in the Environmental Studies Program.

Last fall, Dan was introduced to the East Quabbin Land Trust through Dr. John Baker's course "Small Scale Land Conservation". Students dive deeply into the world of Conservation Restrictions through hands-on monitoring of conserved lands. The students get to speak with land-owners to understand their motivations for conserving the properties, document the conservation values of the land, and meet Conservation Commissioners and land trust members engaged in conserving key parcels in their communities. Dan was on the team that documented the Gross family farm on East Street and Quaker Drive in Petersham. Now that the Conservation Restriction is recorded, the Town will use their report – the Baseline Documentation Report – over the years to ensure that the conservation values are being met. The combination narrative description, photographs and maps fully documents the current condition, or baseline, of the property.

Getting first-hand experience in the field-work and with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping were top priorities for Dan this summer. He contacted the East Quabbin Land Trust and The Trustees of Reservations about possible internships. Lucky for him, both organizations have plenty of conservation restriction work to be done, and he's getting to experience the workings of two different size organizations.

"I'm interested in conservation and like to be outside doing field work. Interning with the East Quabbin Land Trust seemed like an opportunity to get more first-hand experience, both in the outdoors and with technical GIS computer skills. Interning here and with The

Trustees, I can make connections and get a foot in the door for future opportunities."

For the East Quabbin Land Trust, Dan is working with Cynthia to update Baseline Documentation Reports. So far we've focused on five properties in Hardwick. We walked the boundaries taking photographs at critical points, discussed how to describe the land and plants, and made note of wildlife or other interesting features. Now Dan is updating the maps, describing the



photographs and drafting the written description of each property. Each Baseline Documentation Report is between 20 – 30 pages, depending on the number of photographs taken. The current property owner will get a chance to review the report and approve the information before it's considered complete.

In addition to natural resource management and land conservation courses, Dan is exploring environmental politics and environmental ethics at Clark. His course in

Environmental Politics, taught him that environmental issues are more complicated than just understanding the sustainability of a resource or carrying capacity of a region. They explored climate change and the UN process seeking a global agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Dan was surprised at how political environmental decisions can become, but that was clear, especially at the larger scale. Dan cited colonial history as one factor impacting a country's response to outside pressure for reducing emissions. Developing countries want to progress, and feel they have a right to develop, which traditionally increases carbon emissions and is bad for the environment everywhere. Dan's take home message is that developed countries – often former colonial powers – should help the developing countries by sharing cleaner technology and financially supporting these efforts. Additionally, developed countries should also emit less. Dan plans to continue studying these topics and discussions, but has realized that he's most interested in land-use planning and conservation work closer to home.

"This winter I will be doing some Conservation Restriction monitoring for the Ashby Land Trust, where my father is on the Board of Directors. I can take my coursework and these internship experiences and apply the skills I'm learning directly to conservation projects in Ashby." ■

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION - June 25, 2016

During our Saturday evening gala fundraising event we shared stories from the past year - conserving over 300 acres, completing important wildlife habitat practices and engaging young people in learning more about the land around us.

Again this year we had a \$15,000 challenge grant encouraging attendees to make additional contributions to the East Quabbin Land Trust, to be matched one for one. Thanks to our generous supporters we raised over \$22,000 in additional gifts through the challenge, over 10% of our annual budget. The silent auction raised an additional \$6,000. We are grateful to all who come and support the East Quabbin Land Trust.



Please support our corporate sponsors and thank them for underwriting the Land Trust dinner!



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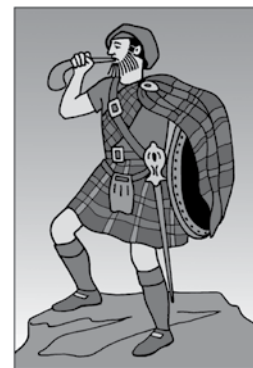
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Ed and Sue Reed for catering the event,
Rose 32 Bread for donating bread,
Robinson's Farm for donating cheese,
The Country Store for donating the tumeric thyme
 lemonade, and
Judith Jones and Nancy Grimes for organizing the
 event and all those who volunteered to set-up and
 clean-up for the event.



MEMBERS OF LEADERSHIP CIRCLE VIEW AREAS BURNED FOR HABITAT

By Richard Cavanaugh

Rain didn't dampen the spirits or interest of members of the Leadership Circle who experienced firsthand the results of two controlled fires spearheaded by the East Quabbin Land Trust. On June 5th, Leadership Circle members met for their first gathering at the land trust's offices in Hardwick and then toured the sites of the prescribed burns that took place at the Frohloff Farm in Ware and Wendemeth Meadow in North Brookfield.

EQLT's Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw led the tour and provided information and insights about all that was involved in conducting the burns, including the coordination with our contractors, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the area fire departments, and the weather. As Cynthia explained, "It seemed like the weather was conspiring against us to accomplish the burn this spring, but the flexibility and responsiveness of our partners, Northeast Forest and Fire Management LLC, the DCR District 9 & 10 fire fighters, Fire Chief Coulombe in Ware, and Fire Chief Gannon in North Brookfield, made it possible for us to take advantage of a narrow window of opportunity."

Funding for the controlled burns came through competitive grants the East Quabbin Land Trust won through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program of the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant Program. EQLT volunteers created the burn breaks by mowing a three-foot swath around the area to be burned, and then raked all the litter from the area. The burn breaks were critical to ensure that the fire crews could safely manage the restorative flames. "These were the first controlled burns to take place in this part of the state, and the DCR and the town fire departments were especially interested to see the results," said Cynthia.

"It is one thing to hear about the controlled burns through the land trust's website and facebook page," said Dick Rossman, a Leadership Circle member from West Brookfield. "It's quite another to experience the look and feel of it on-site and to learn all of the work of the various groups that made it happen."

"To see the first, green shoots of grass popping up through the ashes of multiflora rose bushes just three days after the burns was exciting," commented Bonnie House of Phillipston. "We very much enjoyed learning from Cynthia about the methods that the fire crews used to start and manage the fires and how the age-old meth-

od of using fire to naturally manage the land is making a comeback in the area and throughout the state."

"This outing of the Leadership Circle revealed how much fun we have getting outside together and learning more about all of the good work accomplished by the land trust's volunteers and the state-of-the-art



Leadership Circle members in the van between stops on the June tour

techniques the land trust uses to protect and maintain the area's precious resources," remarked Rich Cavanaugh, EQLT's new development manager. "These Leadership Circle gatherings show great promise in further engaging supporters of the land trust, and I personally look forward to the next gathering, even if it rains again."

Membership in EQLT's Leadership Circle is available to supporters who donate annual operating gifts totaling \$500 or more, whether as one gift or through periodic contributions. The Leadership Circle provides critical organizational funding which sustains the EQLT's diverse program offerings.

Ideas for future Leadership Circle gatherings are taking shape, including a possible canoe trip in early October. Each gathering will feature different aspects of the work that East Quabbin Land Trust does and highlight different natural resources that it helps protect and manage. We hope you will join us. ■

By joining the Leadership Circle, you provide vital support for EQLT's growing commitment to our communities and their natural resources, like the maintenance of the bridges along the Mass Central Rail Trail.

- A monthly gift of \$42 per month as an EQLT Sustainer is an easy and convenient way to join the Leadership Circle as a Patron. Become a Benefactor with a monthly gift of \$84 per month.
- Join the Leadership Circle by making monthly gifts online at www.EQLT.org or through your bank.
- During semi-annual gatherings there are opportunities to gain insights about existing plans and to share your thoughts about conservation in our region. Touring the area, viewing conservation initiatives and stewardship in action, and speaking with the experts involved in each effort are key elements of gatherings of the Leadership Circle.

Best of all, as a Leader, your support allows EQLT to focus our resources on timely opportunities to protect the best in the East Quabbin communities for generations to come. ■

KESTREL PROJECT REPORT

The 2016 tally is four chicks at Wendemuth Meadow in North Brookfield, two chicks at the Waugh Farm in New Braintree, and five eggs at Mandell Hill in Hardwick. The last two sites were new boxes!

American kestrels are our smallest falcons in the northeast, about the size of a robin. Their long tails bob up and down as they perch on a branch or wires scanning the fields for their next meal. The adults have distinctive black stripes running from their eyes to shoulders. Their backs are ruddy-colored with black horizontal stripes; the feathers are reddish-brown but the tip of each feather is black. Their chests are white with specks of brown. The males have bluish wings.

American kestrel populations are in decline. Kestrels' diet is mostly insects, mice, small frogs or snakes, basically anything small enough to be carried by these birds that average 1/2 pound themselves. Kestrels traditionally nest in tree hollows near field edges. Finding appropriate nesting sites is hard, contributing to their reproductive challenges. An ideal location for kestrels is a tree with a hollow in the middle of a 20+ acre field. A rare find these days.

In jump Jeff Smith and Harrison Achilles, two great bird lovers and do-ers. With inspiration from the internet and their own experiences, Jeff and Harrison set out to increase the number of kestrel nesting boxes in central Massachusetts. We have many farms and farm fields, but not so many trees with hollows left. But that can be fixed with a nesting box and willing landowners.

In 2016 kestrel nest boxes were installed at EQLT's Mandell Hill, Wendemuth Meadow, and Frohloff Farm. Also, landowners on Ragged Hill Road in West Brookfield, M o n s o n Turnpike Road in Petersham, Hardwick Pond Road in Ware and West Road in



Inspecting a kestrel nest box. This is a new pole design created by Harrison Achilles to retract, bringing the box down to a height reachable from an eight-foot ladder, a much safer way to check on nesting progress. Kestrel boxes need to be fifteen feet in the air.



Andrew Vitz, the Mass. State Ornithologist, is banding one of two kestrel chicks found in the box at the Waugh Farm in New Braintree. Jeff Smith is recording the measurements.

New Braintree agreed to host kestrel boxes. Harrison and Jeff, with help from Charlie Burnham and Brian Klassanos installed the new boxes.

Having landowners willing to host a nest box is a critical piece in the success of this project. The goal for 2016-17 is to install ten more kestrel boxes. Do you or a friend have 20+ acres of fields where a box could be installed? If so, please contact Cynthia at chenshaw@EQLT.org or 413-477-8229 to set up a site visit with Jeff and Harrison.

Each kestrel box costs about \$100. That's the cost for the lumber, post and hardware. If you'd like to directly support this project, please send your contribution in with "Kestrel Project" on the memo line or otherwise noted. Your gift will mean we can meet our ten box goal! ■



Harrison Achilles and Andrew Vitz holding kestrel chicks after they were banded and are ready to go back into their nest box.

East Quabbin LAND TRUST



Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

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HENRY'S GROVE

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UPCOMING EVENTS...

AUGUST...

Friday and Saturday, August 19th and 20th

Hardwick Community Fair, The Common, Hardwick: The land trust booth and dunk tank will be at the Fair. Be sure to stop by when you're out enjoying all the agricultural and community fun, with animal and vegetable and art shows, tractor parade, frog jumping and kid's parade, chain saw contest and much more. Don't miss it!

SEPTEMBER...

Saturday, June 17th, 1 PM - 3 PM

Hiking Henry's Grove, Lombard Road, Hubbardston: Come explore EQLT's newest preserve, rain or shine. We can walk the old woods road back to the East Branch of the Ware River. We'll do some bushwhacking from there, scouting out good routes for a potential loop trail. Dress for the weather and bring water. We'll have snacks available. Contact Cynthia for directions, 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@EQLT.org.

OCTOBER...

Sunday, October 9th, 9:30 AM

Station Loop Ramble, Mass Central Rail Trail entrance, Hardwick and West Roads, New Braintree: This is the 5th Annual race including a Kid's One Mile, 5-Mile Classic and 5k Run/Walk! All runs incorporate part of the Mass Central Rail Trail. Registration starts at 8:30 am, with starting times for Kid's One Mile at 9:30 am, 5-Mile Classic at 10:00 am, and 5k Run/Walk at 10:05 am. Entry fee is \$20 and includes a T-shirt. Prizes for overall winners and age category winners. Register at EQLT.org.

