

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS



Category 2 - Landscape. Mandell Magic taken by Brian White at Mandell Hill.



Category 10- Structure. Over the Stone Wall taken by Bob Desilets at Mandell Hill.

Category 9 - Human Interest. Penny and Play taken by Rosalynn Cogoli at Mandell Hill.



Our preserves provide people of all ages and abilities with safe places to enjoy the outdoors in many different ways--whether it be a place to spend quality time with your kids, your dog, or just have time to yourself.

We put out a request to the public for photo submissions taken at any of our preserves for nine categories: Landscape, Wildlife, Close-up, Black and White, Abstract, Flowers/Greenery, Water, Human Interest, and Structures. There were nearly 70 submissions showing all kinds of activities at our preserves. **Thank you to all of our contestants for sharing snapshots of why these preserves matter.**

We asked our Facebook followers to vote on their favorite photos from each category—here are a few audience favorites! All winners are posted online.



Category 3 - Close Up. Aim for the Sky taken by Brian White at Moose Brook Preserve.

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



Celebrating 25 years of conservation efforts in the East Quabbin region can be illustrated by the 5,000+ acres of fields, woods and waters that are permanently protected through our joint efforts. We all should feel very positive about that!

Our work together is more than just numbers. Think about the countless walks you've taken at the Mass Central Rail Trail or on other properties. Think about the students that are connected to the outdoors because of summer camp at Wendemuth or nature hikes. Think about the benefits to our communities by our participation in town-wide planning, through open space plans, master plans or municipal vulnerability plans. We have 25 years of impact to build on for the next 25 years!

It is true that the next 25 years will bring more land conservation and more positive community impacts. The Massachusetts Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC) is an important tool for landowners. The CLTC was an essential ingredient for conservation of the Seven Acre Preserve in Petersham, along with grant funding from The 1772 Foundation. Right now, we are assisting five landowners to conserve over 250 acres through the CLTC program. Being able to support landowners in their goal to permanently protect their beloved properties is one of the biggest rewards of our work together.

The US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration grant was awarded to MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership, meaning that with our partners, we can plant 1,000 trees in Ware in the next three years. That's great news for public health outcomes, street beautification and reduction in energy use in the target neighborhoods. The goal is to hire local residents for the seasonal work of planting those 1,000 trees, adding to the economic benefit of the effort.

Much more is planned for the next 25 years, such as expanding the Mass Central Rail Trail in Barre, Hardwick, New Braintree and Ware. We are excited to tackle these important community projects that benefit so many people and build deep relationships with the natural world. Thank you for being part of these efforts and making them successful! ■

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 farms, woods 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 and adaptable local economy, ensuring a high quality of life for generations to come.

We welcome your thoughts, articles, and photographs. 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
 or "Like" us on Facebook!**

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SOFIE: A NATURAL PARTY HOUND AND WONDERFUL ‘DO GOODER’

By Cynthia Henshaw

When you first meet Sofie Vanilla Cookie, it’s obvious that she loves meeting new people and being the center of attention. Sofie is calm and self-possessed; she loves to walk. Actually, she’s game for most everything, especially jumping into the car in the morning and heading out for visiting opportunities as a therapy dog.

One funny story about Sofie is when she and her companion Steve were at a local grocery store one day. Steve struck up a conversation with a woman with a toddler in her carriage. Sofie’s attention went straight to the toddler while Steve was busy chatting. After a few seconds, Sofie made a lunge at the toddler’s cookie. The toddler started to cry, but the mother just laughed as Sofie unapologetically swallowed the cookie. The mom replaced the cookie, and all was well. And Sofie... while she is exceptionally well-behaved, when it comes to food, she’s not a perfect eight-year-old Golden Retriever!

Sofie and Steve love to help people. Ever since they became a pair, their days have been filled by volunteering. Together they visit nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, adult day-care centers, and hospitals. A visit from Sofie perks people right up. Steve recounts a time in October when they visited a cancer patient who had just received some bad news. With the patient’s ‘okay,’ Steve cued up The Monster Mash. Before long, Sofie, the patient, and his family started dancing away, and the somber mood lifted.

It took a few years, but the idea for Sofie’s Test Kitchen coalesced in 2015. Since Sofie is a party hound and wanted to thank groups of people for their hard work supporting local community projects, these two goals came together, and Sofie’s Test Kitchen was born. Over the next four years, Sofie hosted nineteen special luncheons for groups that included the #4 Schoolhouse of Barre, the Hardwick Elementary School teachers, four Farmers Markets, the Mary Lane ER Staff, Friends of the Stone Church, and most recently, Workshop 13. Steve gets tasked with doing the leg work and cooking, while Sofie performs her magic tricks, dances with the participants, and sings. Everyone who attends these events enjoys the opportunity to relax, socialize with their colleagues, eat excellent food, and revel



Sofie and her companion Steve

in being appreciated for their contributions to the community.

Sofie and Steve recently hosted a Wine Tasting Fundraiser for the East Quabbin Land Trust. It was a beautiful day in Hardwick, and the fifteen participants enjoyed the view overlooking the Ware River Valley as six courses of locally made wine were paired with exceptional appetizers. Of course Sofie was the center of attention. She greeted the attendees as they arrived, served her own label of Cayuga wine, supervised an elimination dance contest that Ansley won, and she even sang with the band! On the down side, she displayed her one weakness again when she snuck some food while Steve wasn’t looking.

One of Sofie’s main goals is to bring smiles to people each day. She and Steve manage to do that with their good humor and outgoing natures. We give them both our hearty thanks for being supporters of the East Quabbin Land Trust and for raising nearly \$1,000 through the Sofie’s Test Kitchen Wine Tasting Fundraiser. ■



Wine tasting participants enjoying music and wonderful views

SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK AT THE MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL

By Jess Cusworth

On Saturday April 13th, we hosted a Rail Trail Beautification workday as a part of National Volunteer Week, thanks to funding from the Massachusetts Service Alliance and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Twenty-seven volunteers of varied ages and abilities gathered on one of the first warm days of the season to tackle several projects to enhance our section the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Hardwick.

One group, headed by TerraCorps Youth Education Coordinator Haley Hewitt and Stewardship Committee member Ann Hicks, planted a pollinator garden near the main parking area and laid in parking markers. The enthusiastic children in the group helped by planting flowers, decorating a bird bath and bee waterer, and painting rocks to put in the garden.

Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw and Board member Mark Mattson led a group in creating a level picnic table area at the pony truss bridge, perfect for taking

a rest and enjoying the beautiful view of the Ware River.

Stewardship Committee members Jeff Smith, Tom Clough, and volunteer Gary Brigham headed out with their chainsaws to clear viewpoints near the entrance of the Rail Trail so that visitors can take in the views of the wildlife and wetlands.

The fourth group, lead by TerraCorps Land Stewardship Coordinator Jess Cusworth, worked to clear rubbish and debris from our adjacent Cernauskus loop trail, which takes visitors from the Rail Trail right to the edge of the Ware River.

Haley and Jess headed back to the Wheelwright entrance of the Rail Trail later in the week with a group of Haley's "Wee Weekly Wanderers" to put in a second pollinator garden.

Be sure to check out our new and improved Mass Central Rail Trail, at the corner of Hardwick and West Road in New Braintree! ■



Ken and Mark putting the timbers together for the pollinator garden.



Young helpers decorating a bee watering feature.



Jess enjoying the expanded picnic area at the pony truss.



Mark and Mike pounding rebar into timbers for the picnic area.

PLANNING AN EAST QUABBIN LEGACY — JOIN THE WUNOHKE GUILD

By Richard Cavanaugh

The East Quabbin Land Trust established the Wunohke Guild to recognize and honor generous supporters who, through planned gifts, are committed to conserving the land and preserving our heritage.

Making a planned gift to the East Quabbin Land Trust offers a variety of benefits:

Protecting East Quabbin communities for future generations

- Perpetuating your values
- Reducing the impact of taxes – allowing you to provide more for your beneficiaries
- Providing a gift you can afford while still preserving your assets for retirement and providing for your family

Perhaps the greatest benefit is the peace of mind you will get knowing you chose to reflect your care for the East Quabbin region by making one of the most meaningful gifts a person can make.

Please contact EQLT for information on any number of planned giving options:

A bequest as part of a will or trust

- A gift of land or property
- Designation as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy
- Designation as a beneficiary of a retirement account
- Designation as a beneficiary of a bank or brokerage account or Certificate of Deposit (CD)
- Charitable gift annuities and trusts
- For those 70 ½ or older, a qualified charitable



Wunohke (wuhn- -k) means “beautiful land” in the language of the Nipmuc, the descendants of the first contact peoples who lived and traveled throughout Nippenet, “the freshwater pond place” that includes the area we now identify as east of the Quabbin Reservoir.

A deeper understanding of the language reveals that Wunohke also means “that which produces or brings forth.” This second meaning conveys the strong connection between the land and life-sustaining resources.

Planned gifts to the East Quabbin Land Trust honor the link between our land and our future.

distribution from an IRA can count toward the required minimum distribution for the year and can exclude that amount from taxable income.

A bequest is a common planned giving option. Here is an example of bequest wording you may wish to use when consulting with an estate planning professional:

“I give ([__dollars], [or a specific asset], [or __ percent of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate]) to East Quabbin Land Trust, a Massachusetts non-profit 501(c)(3) organization located at 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick, MA 01037 (Federal ID # 04-3297879).”

If you have already established a planned gift for EQLT, thank you! We would love to hear from you to acknowledge your generosity as we plan for the future. We will also honor any preference for anonymity. ■

BECOME A SUSTAINER — AN EASY WAY TO BE A NEW DONOR

By Richard Cavanaugh

To celebrate its 25th Anniversary and to get ready for the next 25 years, the East Quabbin Land Trust set a goal of recruiting 100 New Donors* this year. Please become a New Donor or ask a friend to become a New Donor today!

Sustainers are those who make automatic monthly gifts to the East Quabbin Land Trust. You can become an Sustainer by scheduling automatic payments through your bank or going online to www.EQLT.org, then click on the Donate button to set up credit card payments.

Monthly payments of \$42 a month (less than \$10 per week) entitle an individual to become a member of our Leadership Circle. Members of the Leadership Circle enjoy opportunities to gather together and gain detailed insights about existing plans and share ideas about conservation in our region. ■

* *New Donors are those who donate \$50 or more this year; who have never given before or at least not in the last three years, and who don't belong to households that have given in the last three years.*

WENDEMUTH MEADOW BOOK PROJECT

By Haley Hewitt



The students at the North Brookfield Youth Center interviewing local history expert Dan Hamilton

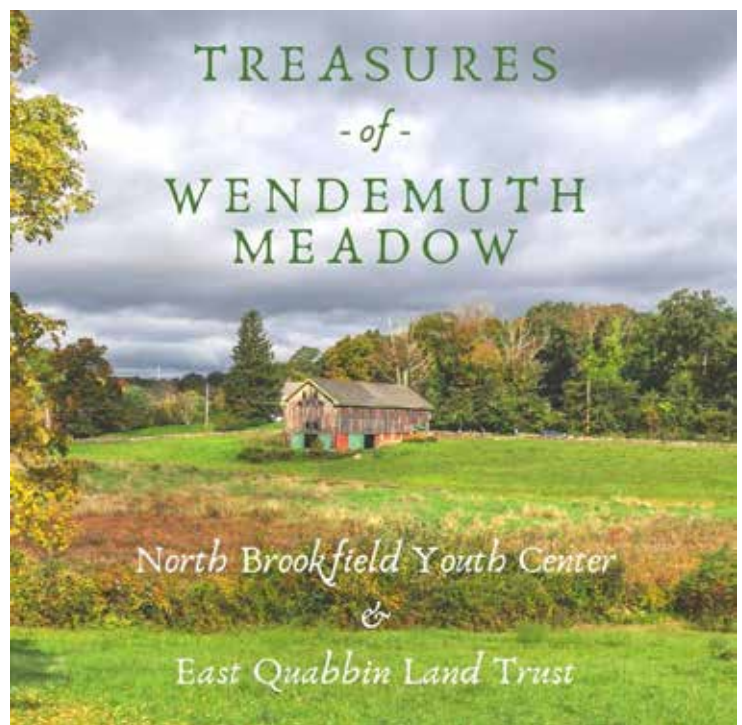
Throughout the spring of 2019, the 32 students at the North Brookfield Youth Center worked closely with EQLT's TerraCorps Youth Education Coordinator Haley Hewitt to research and write a book on Wendemuth Meadow Preserve. The students met and interviewed ten local individuals with knowledge of the property's history, use, residents, and nature. Gathering what they learned, the students then worked together to write *Treasures of Wendemuth Meadow*, a celebration of this "hidden gem" in North Brookfield.

In 2014, the East Quabbin Land Trust acquired a 30-acre parcel of land in North Brookfield and named it Wendemuth Meadow Preserve. Since then, the property has been a refuge of beauty and nature for the people and wildlife of North Brookfield and the region. In particular, the children of the North Brookfield Youth Center have learned to love Wendemuth Meadow, by spending summers there at the E-TEAM (Education Through Environmental exploration, Art and Mindfulness) camp since 2016.

The students at the Youth Center composed questions, conducted interviews with local experts, took extensive notes, then wrote and edited the text of the book. The persons interviewed include local historians Brandon Avery and Dan Hamilton, EQLT volunteers Ann Hicks and Doris Matthews, descendants of Wendemuth property owners Don Bacon and Susan Sandridge, as well as stewards of the property Cynthia Henshaw, Marty Toomey, and Ralph Buzzell. Each page of the book focuses on a "Treasure" that Wendemuth Meadow offers the community of North Brookfield. The book is illustrated with photographs, historical documents, and portraits

of individuals associated with the property.

The publication of this book has been made possible thanks to a grant from the North Brookfield Cultural Council. The book will be available at the E-TEAM Exhibition Day, Wednesday July 31, 1:30 - 3:30pm at Wendemuth Meadow Preserve, 25 Bates Street in North Brookfield. ■



The book launch will be at the E-TEAM Exhibition Day on July 31 at Wendemuth Meadow Preserve.

BOBOLINKS AND KESTRELS AND BLUEBIRDS, OH MY!

By Jess Cusworth

Each spring, the East Quabbin Land Trust and a team of volunteers head out to our Wendemuth Meadow and Mandell Hill preserves to survey the birds that are passing through or have taken up residence. It's important that we monitor the birds at these locations each spring so that we can track changes in the local bird populations over time. Documenting these changes in population informs our preserve management plans and can determine how we prioritize our projects.

This year, our group of seven bird enthusiasts headed out on a warm, sunny morning on the first Saturday of June. We began the morning at Wendemuth Meadow and finished off at Mandell Hill before noon. Here's a look at our list of birds: bobolink, tree swallow, black-billed cuckoo, barn swallow, chimney swift, eastern kingbird, American kestrel, catbird, oven bird, common yellow-throat, indigo bunting, chestnut-sided warbler, house wren, red-winged blackbird, starling, rock dove, American bluebird, English sparrow, Baltimore oriole, yellow-throated vireo, rose-breasted grosbeak, American goldfinch, cardinal, American robin, red-bellied woodpecker, willow flycatcher, turkey vulture, red-tailed hawk, scarlet tanager, brown thrasher, and cedar waxwing.

An important takeaway from this year's survey is that the bobolink populations at our properties continue to decline. This reflects the greater trend of declining grassland bird populations throughout the northeastern U.S. as large swaths of grasslands are developed or are cut for hay in the middle of the nesting cycle. In June 2015, we counted 12-14 breeding bobolink pairs at Wendemuth Meadow. During our June 2018 survey at the property, we only counted



nine male bobolinks and one female. This year, we counted just four male bobolinks and one female.

We're hopeful that our experimental grassland restoration project, which began this spring with the goal of increasing the health and vigor of the grasslands for optimal nesting habitat, will yield positive results. In future years we hope to count 12-14 male bobolinks each spring! For more information on our grassland restoration project, check out our Spring 2019 Newsletter, available online at www.EQLT.org. ■



Clockwise, the photos are of a male bobolink on seed head, red-bellied woodpecker on tree branch, and American kestrel on nest box. Photos by Jess Cusworth.





East
Quabbin
LAND TRUST

Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

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INSIDE: PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



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UPCOMING EVENTS...

MONTHLY POTLUCKS...

Sundays: September 22nd, October 20th, November 10th, 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM, meet at 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick: Bring your favorite dish to share. Come meet other members of all ages as we share good food and learn more about our natural world through bear hair snare research, natural world movies, and historical talks.

AUGUST...

Friday and Saturday, August 16 & 17

Hardwick Community Fair, at Hardwick Common, Hardwick: Don't miss this traditional country fair with modern twists... visit our booth to get the latest trail maps, new tee-shirts and try your hand at the dunk tank.

SEPTEMBER...

Saturday, September 14th, 4:30 PM

25th Anniversary Celebration on Magi's Lawn, at 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick: Join this Farm-to-Table dinner and celebrate the first 25 years of land conservation on the newly created party space made in honor of Magi Ziff, a long-time board member who passed away in 2011. We will toast her legacy and the many conservation accomplishments. Tickets are \$75.

OCTOBER...

Sunday, October 13th, 9:30 AM

Station Loop Ramble, at Mass Central Rail Trail, 1700 Hardwick Road, New Braintree: Family-friendly races that begin and end at the Mass Central Rail Trail, traveling past scenic farmland, and through deep woods, and skirts the Ware River. Races include Kid's One Mile, 5-mile Classic and 5k Run/Walk. Entry fee is \$20 for adults and \$10 for youth under 13.

DECEMBER...

Friday, December 6th, 5:30 PM

Holiday Open House Party, at 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick: Start the holiday season by spending an evening with friends at the East Quabbin Land Trust. Don't miss the fun!