



## We Should All “Bee” Concerned About Pollinators!

By Jessica Cusworth

The number of pollinators across the world have drastically declined in recent decades. New England’s pollinators include butterflies, moths, bees, hummingbirds, and other insects. Bats play an important pollinator role in the southwestern U.S. and in other regions of the world. Pollinators are needed for seed or fruit production of 90% of the world’s flowering plants, and one-third of all U.S. agricultural products depend on them. Pollinators are facing massive population declines due to pesticide use, habitat destruction, climate change, and non-native invasive plants. Nine percent of bee and butterfly populations and 16.5% of vertebrate pollinators like hummingbirds and bats are threatened with global extinction. What can we do to help?

The East Quabbin Land Trust is taking steps to do our part to protect pollinators. We recently hosted a discussion of Jodi Helmer’s *Protecting*

*Pollinators* book and agreed on several ways we can all make changes at our own homes to help pollinators.

One change is adding native plants to gardens and landscapes. Did you know that native plants attract four times as many insects as non-native plants? The East Quabbin Land Trust prioritizes planting with natives at our preserves. We have native pollinator gardens at Wendemuth Meadow Preserve, the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree, and will create three new pollinator gardens at the accessible Rail Trail in Ware at our National Volunteer Day event on June 21st. Native species you’ll find at our preserves include Butterfly Weed, Black-eyed Susans, Bee Balm, and Columbine. Including native shrubs in your landscapes is also important for pollinators. Shrubs like Spice bush, American pussy willow, and buttonbush are excellent to incorporate into your native pollinator-friendly gar-

dens. It’s also crucial to include plants or shrubs that bloom at different times throughout the growing season. It’s particularly important to include plants that bloom early in the season.

Another change we discussed was adjusting our views about what a “perfect” lawn looks like. Many homeowners prioritize bright green, weed-free, perfectly manicured lawns. Not only do these lawns lack pollinator-friendly plants, but the use of pesticides to keep the grass weed-free may be toxic to pollinators. If possible, shift your mowing cycle to every other week, raise the cutting blade level, and by encouraging clover, a variety of grasses, and weeds to grow, you will provide both carbon sequestration and benefits to pollinators. Dandelions benefit pollinators! Check out our website for pollinator-friendly plant lists and other information about how you can help pollinators. ■



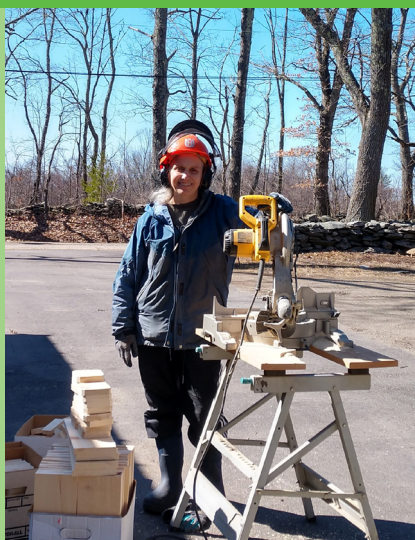
Folks gathered at the EQLT office to discuss “Protecting Pollinators” by Jodi Helmer

Name	Flower Color	Flowering Time
Witch hazel (Hamamelis virginiana)	Yellow	Fall
Blazing star (Liatris spicata)	Purple, white	Fall, Summer
Butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa)	Orange	Summer
Red columbine (Aquilegia canadensis)	Red, yellow, pink	Spring

Sample of native plants and shrubs from  
the resources on EQLT.org

## MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

*Cynthia Henshaw*



We are launching into this new world with video conference calls and 'working from home' offices. Fortunately, much of land conservation work continues. Emails and phone calls were always the staple way for communicating about property titles, appraisal requests and conservation restriction language.

Accomplishing on-the-ground stewardship and educational programming is another matter. Our March volunteer stewardship morning was at Pynchon's Grist Mill Preserve, off Wickaboag Valley Road in West Brookfield. Our group spread out and cleared trails, replaced trail and boundary signage, and evaluated options to cross Sucker Brook. The coronavirus hadn't forced "social distancing" or the cessation of gatherings just yet. We are rescheduling our volunteer event at the Mass Central Rail Trail segment at Frohloff Farm in Ware to June 21st. Stay tuned!

A series of landowner workshops in April and May will either be converted to videos or delayed until summer. There are publications and online materials available for landowners in many places. Check out [Massland.org](http://Massland.org) and head over to their "Resources" page, or visit [MassWoods.org](http://MassWoods.org). Please reach

out to me at [chenshaw@EQLT.org](mailto:chenshaw@EQLT.org) with questions.

Be sure to take time in the coming weeks to visit EQLT Preserves. There are 12 with trails just waiting to be explored. Take your family or walk by yourself and try a Preserve that you've not visited before! Check our website and Facebook page to make sure that activities, like a Birding and Wildflower Walk at Moose Brook Preserve on Saturday, May 2nd are still happening.

As we are taking a pause in our usual busy schedules, we can explore more online resources. One such resource is a climate change solution simulator called En-ROADS, found at [Climateinteractive.org](http://Climateinteractive.org) under "Tools". This tool allows you to adjust 18 different inputs and you can even adjust the underlying assumptions. The goal is to learn how different factors impact projected temperature rise. How much does decreasing population growth change global temperature? What about increasing natural gas instead of coal?

Now that we've all been thrown this coronavirus curve-ball that's shaken our daily lives, let's take some time to change our habits by going outdoors more and learning how we are impacting the natural processes. ■

## 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.

**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

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Hardwick, MA 01037-0005

413-477-8229

Email: [EQLT@comcast.net](mailto:EQLT@comcast.net)

**Visit our website at [www.EQLT.org](http://www.EQLT.org)  
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# Ken Carlson: Outdoor Empowerment

By Jessica Cusworth

If you follow the East Quabbin Land Trust on Facebook, you may have seen the video of volunteer Ken Carlson rolling down our Accessible Rail Trail in Ware. It's time to meet the man behind the video! Ken is a life-long Massachusetts resident and lover of all things outdoors. He spent his entire life as an avid fisher and outdoors explorer. He fondly recalls the summers of his childhood when he and his best friend would get dropped off at the old stone church in West Boylston, and they would stay there all day walking around the reservoir and fishing until the sun set. Ken was in a car accident as a young adult and he sustained a spinal cord injury that left him unable to walk. Through his courage, hard work, and support from his wife and other loved ones, Ken hasn't let mobility challenges stop him from being an outdoorsman.

Ken is a volunteer assistant coach for the soccer team at St. John's High School in Shrewsbury, where he's coached for 20 years. He retired from his wheelchair basketball league after 25 years of playing, which allows him to spend more time outdoors. He explains how being outdoors in a quiet place is the best way to resolve your own problems--"the forest draws you in; it dissolves and

shrinks whatever problems you're having. It makes it all more palatable and makes you more comfortable in your own skin."

Ken finds joy in empowering others to get out into nature. He is a mentor for folks of all ages, and especially loves teaching people how to fish. He sees this process as a chain effect where one person encourages another to get outdoors, who then encourages others. He recalls being particularly proud of seeing the 12-year-old boy he taught to fish go on to teach his own kids about the joys of fishing. On empowering folks with mobility challenges to go outdoors, Ken explains that it's difficult, but the process is about learning, safety, and fun. "Learn first, safety is second, third is fun. You can slowly expand from there. Getting outdoors is healthy in so many ways because it builds both muscle and mental stability. It's good for your soul." In addition to his love of fishing, Ken is an enthusiastic hunter. He loves the adventure, whether or not he's successful. He explains how hunting helps you learn to deal with disappointments and be able to move on.

As someone who values land conservation and all the outdoor activities it makes possible, Ken also spends

time volunteering for EQLT. The land trust reached out to him in 2016 after reading an article he wrote for MassWildlife Magazine called "The Worst Deer Hunter Ever", which explains his journey learning new ways to navigate the outdoors. Since then, Ken planted grasses and made entrance garden improvements at the Mass Central Rail Trail in Ware, starred in a video to promote the trail, volunteered at the Petersham Climate Protest, shared tips and tricks in the outdoors during the 2018 Wheel-a-thon, and inspired the mats making the barn at Wendemuth Meadow wheelchair accessible.

Ken explores his creative side by creating video projects. He hopes that photos and videos of him enjoying the outdoors will motivate others to go on their own adventures. He uses a GoPro to create videos showing his outdoor adventures with his dog, Chet. He submitted one of his videos to our recent Video Contest, which you can view on our website! You can check out Ken's other videos on his Youtube channel, called "Ken and Chet Outdoors".

We thank Ken for his endless positivity and hard work! We are grateful to have such a kind and courageous supporter of the East Quabbin Land Trust. ■



Photo by the late Bill Byrne.  
Ken Carlson and his dog, Chet in 2016

***"Getting outdoors is healthy in so many ways because it builds both muscle and mental stability. It's good for your soul."  
-Ken Carlson***



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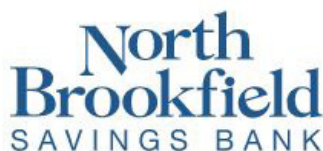
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# Drinking Water Investigations with the Envirothon Team

By Sophie Andrews

Meeting with the Envirothon team members from Quabbin Regional High School has been a blast. Envirothon is an after-school program that trains students about ecological literacy and environmental sciences. Specifically, students dive into soil and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and a special topic of the year. This year's topic is drinking water.

The Envirothon competition is one large event, where teams from across the Commonwealth compete in the four resources areas and present their community service project. Team members analyze soil layers, identify tree species and describe habitat characteristics. In my capacity as the Youth Education Coordinator, I spent most Tuesdays after school with the Envirothon team learning in school or during fields trips. Together we studied water policy by interviewing the Barre Water Department staff, learned how to categorize and describe soils, and learned from DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) educators about how and where the greater Boston metropolitan area's drinking water comes from, how it travels, and how it is tested.

Recently, I set up an interview for the kids with Gabby McQueen, who works with Mass Rivers Alliance, a non-profit organization that aims to steer good environmental policy towards cleaning Massachusetts rivers. The kids got to ask her the questions they formulated. "What is the largest thing contribut-

ing to poor river water quality in Massachusetts?" Gabby told us about two main concerns. First, there are too many nutrients getting into our surface waters, which causes algal blooms. Secondly, pollution associated with large rainfalls, where water carrying pollutants from roads and lawns overflow river banks into drinking water sources and is left untreated.

As part of the Envirothon challenge, the team completes a community service project based on the current issue topic: drinking water. During a planning walk for our National Volunteer Day event on June 21st, I helped assess of the excess water adjacent to the rail trail that could be improved by establishing a rain garden. The Envirothon team is enthusiastic about creating a rain garden in that location.

What is a rain garden? A rain garden is a garden of native shrubs, perennials, and flowers that gets planted in depressions formed on a natural slope. It holds in rain water runoff that flows from lawns or impervious surfaces like roofs and driveways. They convert large amounts of runoff to usable water for plants, which in turn provides wildlife habitat. Rain gardens improve water quality by capturing storm water surges and allowing the plants to reduce water pollutants. Elicia and her Envirothon students are excited to start this rain garden project at the Accessible Trail on the rail trail in Ware in May. ■

## See What Sophie Has Been Up To



*The Envirothon Team on a field trip at the Quabbin Reservoir where they learned about the greater Boston drinking water supply*



*Home school students planting pollinator seeds*



*Home school students cleaning out bluebird boxes at Mandell Hill*

# The Challenge Remains: Please Give!

By Rich Cavanaugh

*The Annual Dinner & Silent Auction is rescheduled to September 19th, but the critical \$20,000 Challenge is starting April 25th.*

The Land Trust is grateful to all who join us at the Annual Dinner & Silent Auction. This event is our largest fundraiser of the year. Its success depends on those who purchase auction items and make or pledge gifts in response to the *Challenge*.

For the last several years Karen and Dave Davis of Petersham have issued a generous *Challenge* where they match gifts made or pledged at the dinner. "While we can wait for the dinner," remarks Dave Davis, "EQLT still needs the funds it typically raises this time of year. Karen and I are pleased to once again

match any gifts made or pledged in response to this *Challenge* up to a total of \$20,000."

Starting on April 25th, a page will be ready on EQLT.org where supporters can contribute online toward the challenge. We will communicate the *Challenge* through emails and social media posts. Whether you plan on attending the dinner in September or not, please help us meet the Davis's \$20k *Challenge*.

For Dick and Barbara Rossman of West Brookfield, the *Challenge* is their preferred opportunity to give. As Dick says, "While we are always

thankful for the work that gets accomplished by EQLT's staff and volunteers, we like expressing our support and thanks at the Annual Dinner. Since our gift will be matched, we are doubling its impact for the organization."

Help EQLT meet the \$20k *Challenge* and take this great opportunity to double the impact of your gift. Remember, donors giving \$500 or more annually become members of the Leadership Circle. A monthly gift of just \$42 as a Sustainer gets you there. ■



Karen and Dave Davis of Petersham

Help Meet  
the \$20k  
Challenge!

Visit EQLT.org  
starting April 25th  
to DOUBLE the  
impact of your gift!

## Newsletters - Read All About Them

By Rich Cavanaugh

Along with land conservation and stewardship, the East Quabbin Land Trust serves an educational mission. Our quarterly newsletters have long been a key way to keep community members aware of the work the land trust is doing and to offer information pertinent to that work. In addition to increasing electronic communication, we take the following measures to reduce the cost and environmental impact of our print newsletters:

**\*Print local:** EQLT newsletters are printed by Highland Press, a local, family-run printing operation established in 1925. They provide excellent service at a competitive rate.

**\*Use eco-friendly materials:** The paper is certified for its recycled content by the Forest Stewardship Council, and the inks are vegetable-based.

**\*Thin out newsletter mailing list:** Only those who have requested newsletters or have supported the land trust by volunteering or donating are on the list.

**\*Print in full color:** More sophisticated machines have made color printing cheaper. Printing in full color is more efficient than two-color printing (our old method), which requires extra press cleaning between runs.

An archive of past newsletters is available on our website, so you are free to recycle and re-use the hard copies. If you would prefer not to receive the newsletter, send an email to Cynthia at [chenshaw@eqtl.org](mailto:chenshaw@eqtl.org). We hope that you'll continue to read the newsletter so that you won't suffer any FOMO – fear of missing out :) . ■





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## INSIDE: WE SHOULD ALL "BEE" CONCERNED ABOUT POLLINATORS!



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## UPCOMING EVENTS...

### Online \$20k Challenge

**Saturday, April 25th | Your very own couch!**

Support more conservation and care of the land from the comfort of your own home! Visit [EQLT.org](http://EQLT.org) to contribute online toward our \$20k Challenge starting on April 25th. We'll email and post on Facebook with more information. Please make your gift to help us meet the \$20k Challenge.

### Nineteenth Annual Silent Dinner and Auction

**Saturday, September 19th 5:30 PM | Eagle Hill, 242 Old Petersham Road, Hardwick**

We're excited to celebrate in good health at this event at the new date. This exciting event is held each year at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill and is the land trust's biggest fundraiser. The evening includes a festive dinner featuring local cuisine, eclectic auction items, music, and lots of fun!

### Station Loop Ramble

**Sunday, October 11th, 9:30 AM | Mass Central Rail Trail at West Road, New Braintree**

Family-friendly races that explore the Mass Central Rail Trail, traveling past scenic farmland, 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.

