



## Conservation of E-Pete Farm in Oakham

By Cynthia Henshaw

As you turn onto Rutland Road from North Brookfield Road (Rte. 148) the beautiful pasture commands your attention. The hillside is open all the way up and over the top. It's along this slope that cows have grazed for decades. The intention is for farming to continue indefinitely.

Eva Grimes is a critical part of this farming legacy since her grandfather ran the farm a hundred years ago. Over the years different farming enterprises changed. But this is the place where Ms. Grimes grew to love cows (see the article on page three to learn more about Ms. Grimes).

Recently, Ms. Grimes donated her 74-acre property, along with the buildings, to the East Quabbin Land Trust. Our charge is to keep the land farmed with no more houses. Ms. Grimes' love of the land and Oakham makes this possible, and we want to thank her for the opportunity to turn her vision into reality.

Also, we are fortunate that Ms.

Grimes wants to live in her trailer, helping to keep an eye on the farm! She retained a life-estate, so she can live at the farm as long as she wants to. As with every gift of significant monetary value, we worked with the lawyers to be sure that the transaction details are clear. Because of Ms. Grimes' age (94), we acknowledge the five-year look-back period should Medicare be needed to care for Ms. Grimes at some point in the future. We trust that the combination of family longevity and healthy farm living means that Ms. Grimes will be still be at the farm when she turns 99, ensuring that the land can remain farmland into the future.

The land includes six different fields. Some, like the pasture and hay fields, are open and currently managed for agricultural products. Others haven't been managed in recent years and are growing back to white pine, multiflora rose, honeysuckle, and other woody plants. The remainder is woods that were harvested two or three years ago. The most likely area

for a public access hiking loop is between Rutland Road and Ware Corner Road.

The farm is well set-up for an active diversified farm operation with two large barns, pasture and fields. It's been a number of years since cows were on the property full-time, but thanks to Ms. Grimes' friendships with Janet Edwards, there are Guernseys out to pasture this summer. Hope you can drive by this summer and enjoy seeing the cows swish their tails as they graze the hillside.

Like at every farm, there is plenty of work to be done – priorities for volunteers include targeted cutting of invasive plants, clean-up of metal and other refuse, and design of a walking trail. The plan is to begin these projects this fall, when the temperatures and social distancing are more easily managed. Be sure to get in touch with Cynthia at [chenshaw@EQLT.org](mailto:chenshaw@EQLT.org) or (413) 477-8229 if you'd like to be part of the farm care team. ■



*Eva Grimes' farm in Oakham*

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**Email [Chenshaw@EQLT.org](mailto:Chenshaw@EQLT.org) to join.**

## MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

*Cynthia Henshaw*



If you read all the articles in this newsletter, you'll get a sense about many of the active projects undertaken this spring. There are plenty of other projects in the works, such as...

1. Moving forward under social distancing guidelines, we still want to do things together and outdoors. Please join us! Group trips this July include paddling on Hardwick Pond and hiking in the Quabbin. If there are outdoor adventures that you'd like to see happen, let me know. To not miss any of the announcements, be sure we have your email so you get the latest information on what's happening.

2. If you and your family (or social-distance circle) are looking for a project that you can work on over the summer, please consider volunteering for one of our stewardship projects:

- Clearing and cleaning at a bridge along the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Hardwick
- Pulling hardwood saplings in the pitch pine stand at Frohloff Farm in Ware, or
- Installing posts needed at Wendemuth Meadow in North Brookfield and others at the Mass Central Rail Trail for interpretive signs. Your efforts make a big difference!

3. E.T.E.A.M. summer camp in North Brookfield has gone virtual, but there will be weekly stories posted at Wendemuth Meadow for all visitors to enjoy. While you're there, hopefully it will be easy to spot dead invasive knapweed in the fields, which is being treated with herbicide to reduce its population explosion.

4. We're also gearing back up for fall tree planting in Ware. Now we know that masks and social distancing can keep people safe, a small crew will be hired to begin planting trees when the weather cools down in September. It will be exciting to see the changes these trees will bring over time. If you are in the planting zone, please be in touch to schedule an appointment with the arborist.

5. Several wetland hurdles are cleared to expand the Mass Central Rail Trail in Ware and the permission request is being reviewed by National Grid. Adding these 2.7 miles of former railroad bed to the Mass Central Rail Trail system is a win-win-win, so we expect to get approval this fall. Keep an eye out for requests for volunteer help to begin widening the trail once we get the green light. ■

## 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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**Visit our website at [www.EQLT.org](http://www.EQLT.org)  
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# Eva Grimes

By Cynthia Henshaw

A visit with Eva Grimes can't really begin until Mittens checks you out. Like most young cats, he's got to sniff and inspect any visitors. He's got sharp claws too, which he shows off by being a good mouser. According to Ms. Grimes he hasn't quite learned that mice – dead or alive – don't belong in bed. That's easy to forgive because he's such a congenial companion.

Ms. Grimes was born in Coldbrook Springs and early on moved to North Brookfield Road, just down the hill from her grandfather's farm. That's the land she farmed for decades and recently donated to the East Quabbin Land Trust. Her love of Oakham was increased by having adventures away from central Massachusetts. That includes a stint at a dairy farm in Stoughton after graduating from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture in 1948. Plus, years in the south as a Women's Air Force member during the Korean War, and various trips to Poland, Romania, Denmark, China and Australia.

It's her time here in Oakham and as part of the local farming community that endears Ms. Grimes to so many. Ms. Grimes

co-founded the Oakham Youth Fair, which ran for 55-years, giving youngsters a chance to show their animal husbandry and horticulture skills. She also had long stints on the Board of Assessors and Oakham Historical Association.

As you might imagine, growing up on a farm, Ms. Grimes was strong and agile. Her skills showed as a member of the Air Force softball team. Ms. Grimes was an all-star short-stop, and regularly belted the ball over the opposing team's heads, and they'd yell "Damn Yankee, go home!" Even after breaking her leg, which never fully healed, Ms. Grimes continued farming with a brace, crutches and tractor. Jerseys are her favorite breed, but she likes all kinds of cows.

Ms. Grimes comes from a family with good longevity. Or if you believe her, "The Lord don't want me, the Devil won't take me, so I gotta stay around and pester everyone." We hope that Eva Grimes continues to "pester" us for many years to come. ■



*Eva and Mittens.*

"Eva's dedication to agriculture is well known in our town. The Oakham Youth Fair, which she organized for many years, was always a highlight during my childhood. I look forward to seeing cattle at her farm once again. Her generous gift to the East Quabbin Land Trust is appreciated by my family."

— Jenny Downer Laramée

"Since moving to Oakham in 1986 I've admired Eva's farm through every year, every season. Her dairying was the first place I drank raw milk. Her hayfield was the first place I saw a flock of more than thirty turkeys early one misty morning. For many years Eva maintained Oakham Telephone Listings, greatly missed since 2012. Her presentation of the Oakham Youth Fair, later continuing as "Oaktoberfest", brought pleasure to our whole community. As commercial solar applications suddenly discovered Oakham in 2018-2019, there was great concern that Eva's beautiful hillside fields would become a huge commercial solar application, illegal to deny outright and impossible to screen from view. Eva's gift of her farm enables preservation of this irreplaceable landscape and continuation of its agricultural use through the East Quabbin Land Trust. Thank you, Eva!" — Philip Warbasse

"Eva used to loan my sister and me calves to show at the fair. Plus, Eva also has a love for ice cold coke in glass bottles and I think of her whenever I see one. Eva is a wonderful Oakhamite and the gift of her farm increases her legacy." — Matt Neylon

"I've known Eva since the time that I worked for her when she was an Assessor for the Town of Oakham (1960's) and worked with her as co-4-H leaders (1970's). During those years, she showed her love for the E-Pete Farm and the Town of Oakham in many, many ways. She has always been an honest, giving, caring and especially hard-working and patriotic person with the most wonderful sense of humor! Her modesty won't allow her to say of the wonderful influence that she's had on so many young people. Eva's gift of her beloved property is very special." — Donna Neylon

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# 2020 Annual Auction - Online!

## September 19th - 27th



**Bid on wonderful  
food, activities, and items from the  
comfort of your own home!**

**The auction website will be shared in September.**

**In the meantime, send an email to Cynthia at [Chenshaw@eqlt.org](mailto:Chenshaw@eqlt.org) if you  
want to donate an item to this auction.**

**Thank you for supporting the East Quabbin Land Trust!**





# Accessible Rail Trail Updates

By Jess Cusworth

Have you visited the Accessible Rail Trail at 250 Church Street in Ware, yet? This half-mile section of Mass Central Rail Trail was completed in 2019. This popular trail features hard packed stone dust, making it accessible for all ages and abilities. Volunteers put the finishing touches on the trail this spring thanks to funding from the Mass Service Alliance for National Volunteer Week.

As you walk down the trail you'll notice three new pollinator gardens featuring native plants. A big thank you to Tom Clough, the Zonas,

Cogolis, and Salvadores for planting these gardens! The Salvadores also constructed a cinderblock bench down by the Ware River, which is a perfect spot to rest on a hot day. EQLT Stewardship Committee members Tom Clough, Ken Abair, and Harrison Achilles placed several log benches and mile markers along the trail as well. Learn about native plants and pollinators, the Ware River, and the history of the Mass Central Railroad from the interpretive signs placed along the trail. Come see these great visitor improvements for yourself! ■

# Grassland Restorations Complete

By Jess Cusworth

Grassland bird populations across the United States have sharply declined over the last several decades as a result of habitat loss from development, field fragmentation, and haying in the middle of nesting season. Mandell Hill and Wendemuth Meadow host breeding pairs of grassland birds, such as bobolinks, each year. Annual monitoring at both properties showed that their populations were rapidly declining, even though we don't hay these properties during the nesting season. We noted that the grass quality had been degraded by invasive plants and poor soil quality over the years, which made for an unfavorable vegetation composition for bobolinks.

We received funding from the MassWildlife Habitat

Management Grant Program to restore the grasslands at Wendemuth Meadow and Mandell Hill for bobolinks and other grassland birds. A professional crew spot-treated invasive plants to encourage more grass growth at Wendemuth Meadow, and lime and fertilizer were applied to all fields. The lime increases the soil's pH, making it less acidic and less ideal for weeds. At Mandell Hill, we increased field connectivity by clearing the invasive plants that grew over the stone walls between the fields and applied lime to the fields. There was no need to pay for fertilizer at Mandell Hill - the cows give that to us for free!

We're hopeful that the bobolinks will appreciate the restored grasslands at our preserves! ■

## Spring Stewardship Scenes



*The Salvadores built this cinder block bench near the accessible loop trail. They also planted a pollinator garden.*



*The Cogolis planted the garden at the middle of the trail.*



*The Zonas and volunteer Tom Clough planted the garden at the trail entrance.*



*Lime spreading at Mandell Hill.*

# Supporters Exceed the 2020 Challenge

By Rich Cavanaugh

Forced to alter plans for the Annual Dinner & Silent Auction, we didn't know what to expect when Karen and Dave Davis encouraged us to have a virtual fundraiser and offered to match contributions made this spring, up to \$20,000.

Wow! What we received was an exciting and generous response from you, our EQLT supporters. When it looked like we were approaching the \$20,000 challenge issued by the Davises, Mark Mattson and Judy Lane upped the ante with another \$5,000 match. When EQLT supporters approached that goal, we set the bar a bit higher to bolster our educational and outreach initiatives in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Karen and I are thrilled, but not surprised, that EQLT supporters responded so favorably to the spring challenge," remarked Dr. Davis. "We know and appreciate the good work done by Cynthia and the organization's volunteers and staff, and we're glad to see so many others feeling the same way. Thanks also to Mark and Judy for weighing in to help make it even more successful."

The response to the 2020 Challenge signaled an increase of 36% more participants and coincidentally 36% more funds given this year than at last year's dinner.

While there may be many reasons for this, judging from some of the com-

ments we received from supporters, the pandemic reinforced the importance of land conservation and the caring that is the basis of our work together, including these examples from the last few months:

- Our hiking and walking trails actively used by many during this time of "stay-at-home" work and unemployment. Parking areas were (and are) often full, as people maintain a 6-foot social distance on the trails.
- Conserving local farmland to ensure that our farmers have the physical space to produce food for our

region, vital to our future sustainability.

- Sharing educational resources and outdoor projects appropriately sized for individuals and families when schools weren't in session. For instance, EQLT provided kits for over 100 bluebird houses made by you and your neighbors to support these declining birds.

While 2020 will likely present additional challenges, it is gratifying and encouraging to know that, in this important time, EQLT supporters are more than up for a challenge. ■



# Making EQLT Part of Your Lasting Legacy

By Rich Cavanaugh

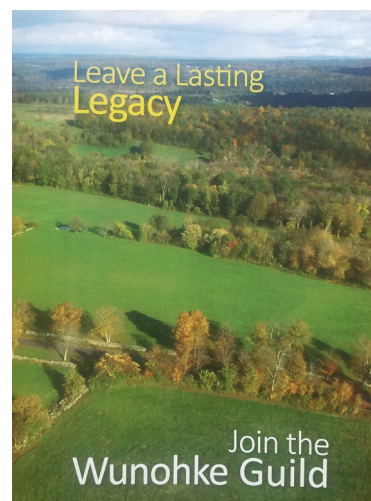
The East Quabbin Land Trust established the Wunohke Guild to recognize and honor supporters who, through planned gifts, are committed to conserving the land, preserving our heritage.

Wunohke (wuhn-ō-kē) 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.

Wunohke Guild members support future land trust activities through gifts of securities or real property or by listing the East Quabbin Land Trust as a beneficiary in a will or life insurance policy, for example. Planned gifts to the East Quabbin Land Trust honor the link between our land and our future.

For more information, feel free to contact Rich Cavanaugh at [rcavanaugh@eqtl.org](mailto:rcavanaugh@eqtl.org) or Cynthia Henshaw at [chenshaw@eqtl.org](mailto:chenshaw@eqtl.org). ■







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