



SUMMER 2025

P.O. Box 5, 120 Ridge Road,  
Hardwick, MA 01037

413.477.8229 |  
EQLT.org

## Conservation along the Ware River

The Ware River is a key landscape feature that cuts through the central part of the East Quabbin region. Running southwesterly from Hubbardston to Ware, pulling water from many wooded slopes and cold-water streams on its way to the Chicopee River, ultimately to join the Connecticut River and the Atlantic Ocean. Since the last glacial retreat, the central portion of the Ware River flows over the wide, gravelly bed of glacial Lake Winimusset. The river has meandered greatly, forming a complex series of oxbows, bays, inlets and backwaters along the otherwise gravelly main stem.

Over the years, EQLT has partnered with various landowners along the corridor to permanently protect the river bank, its associated wetlands and uplands. Places you can go visit the Ware River include Henry's Grove in Hubbardston, River's Edge Preserve in Hardwick, and the Frohloff Farm in Ware. The most recent conservation effort included the purchase of 160+ acres in Barre and New Braintree with over two miles of frontage along the Ware River.

Conservation of this property is the confluence of many important considerations. First, the former Mass Central Railroad ran through the property. If awarded a MassTrails grant for accessible trail construction, then the first part of a two-mile segment of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) can be created in 2025-26, adding to the seven miles of MCRT already open for public recreation and transportation in our region.

Second, immediately upstream of the former railroad crossing is the Wheelwright Pond Dam. Raitto Industrial Park owns the dam, and because the dam is no longer needed for industrial purposes and was deemed to not be economically viable for hydropower, the owner wants to remove the structure. Removal of the dam will reconnect 100+ miles of cold-water fishery streams throughout the watershed. Access from the property is essential for successful removal of the dam.



Photograph by Mike Leclaire

Third, is the opportunity to enhance inland barrens habitat. A significant portion of this recent acquisition of the former Tanner-Hiller Airport includes some areas with unique barrens soil conditions, which support rare plant, insect and animal species. Rewilding and restoration of this unique habitat type is important to support rare species such as the grasshopper sparrow, which need large sandplain grasslands.

"We are excited to learn more about the variety of wildlife using the land," stated Judith Jones, board president. "Our summer intern, Samantha Shea, recently documented a moth species that had never been identified in Massachusetts before."

Ultimately, the property will be transferred to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Fish and Game as a new Wildlife Management Area. The land will remain open to the public for outdoor recreational uses, including hunting, fishing, birdwatching and recreating on the Mass Central Rail Trail.

Other partners include Mass Audubon, who supported the acquisition with a \$150,000 grant from Mass Audubon's 30x30 Catalyst Fund. "This land has tremendous ecological value and conserving it will not only protect threatened species like the grasshopper sparrow, but potentially double the size of the existing grassland bird habitat," said Jocelyn Forbush, Chief Conservation Officer at Mass Audubon. "This is precisely what our Catalyst Fund is intended to do

and we're happy to have played a part in protecting this crucial property for everyone, forever." In addition, an anonymous foundation and private individuals made direct contributions toward conservation of this important property along the Ware River.

We look forward to celebrating conservation of the river and land in 2026 at conclusion of the rewilding process. Please join us! ■



## MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

*Cynthia Henshaw*



Supporting local agriculture is a cornerstone of the work accomplished by the East Quabbin Land Trust. Conserving agricultural soils and ensuring farmland is used to sustainably grow foods are a major focus. By example, 23 acres along East Street in Petersham are now held under conservation restriction, thereby allowing the private owners to expand their agricultural offerings, practice forest management, and enjoy the deep woods along Mocassin Brook.

Volunteers play a key role in other ways to actively support for agriculture. EQLT's Seven Acre Preserve in Petersham is leased to World Farmers, a non-profit that encourages immigrant farmers to start and successfully run farming businesses. Storage of tools and equipment is a critical need. Rich Dorsch, Craig Winer and Gus Block stepped forward to build a storage shed this summer. It's nearly finished. We are grateful for all the skill and energy they've given to make the storage shed a reality! ■



*Craig Winer, Gus Block  
and Rick Dorsch at the  
beginning of the shed  
construction at Seven Acre  
Preserve in Petersham*



*The nearly finished shed!!*

## THE EAST QUABBIN LAND TRUST

fosters a meaningful relationship with the natural world by conserving, connecting with and caring for the farmlands, woodlands and waters in the East Quabbin 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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# Meet Our Summer Interns: Samantha Shea and Brady Killay

Hello, I am Samantha Shea, one of the EQLT summer interns. I am a rising junior at the College of the Holy Cross, and studying Biology and Environmental Studies. Some of my favorite things to do include hiking, baking, reading, and hanging out with friends in my free time. I grew up in Rutland with my parents, brother, and two cats, Winchester and Frankie.

Growing up in Rutland is where my love for the environment began. I formed a deep connection and appreciation of nature by playing in the woods behind my house and exploring the Mass Central Rail Trail. Later I attended Wachusett Regional High School and began to learn more about climate change and its devastating impact on both people and the natural world. This inspired me to enroll at Holy Cross and to study the environment.

I decided to become an EQLT intern in order to learn more about conservation work and to get some hands-on experience in the woods and fields around our region. In my first few weeks as an intern, I worked with Brady and Cynthia to clear two new hiking trail segments (rail trail in Ware and Pat's Sanctuary), put up signage at existing trails (Henry's Grove), monitor trees that were planted by EQLT in the past few years in the Town of Ware, begin monitoring moth populations on conservation lands, and tackle invasive plants. I am excited to continue establishing those trails, to work at the community garden, and to make a series of informative videos about tree identification with Brady. In the future, I expect to continue my education and get a masters in biology so that I can continue to help mitigate the climate crisis.

I am deeply concerned about the loss of biodiversity around the world, rising sea levels and their effects on habitat loss, and the impact of rising temperatures and changing seasonal patterns on ecosystems. The world is changing very rapidly at the moment and I believe that the best way to combat this is for communities to work together and learn from each other as the East Quabbin Land Trust is doing. ■



My name is Brady Killay, and I am a Forest Ecology major at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with East Quabbin Land Trust this summer where I can apply much of my school knowledge into real world stewardship projects.

My home in Royalston MA was surrounded by forests. I knew they were important, but I never knew the complexity of these systems until I got older. After graduating from high school, I felt like there was no career option I could see myself doing for the rest of my life. I don't know exactly how I heard about forestry, but I do remember it felt like something I could really pursue. Not only as a career choice, but something on a more personal level that I believed was bigger than myself. I wanted to conserve the ecological benefits

that forests provide to our health and society, wildlife, and water resources. I remember I started to see forests differently after my first intro to forestry class in community college. I then found foresters and authors that influenced me like Tom Wessels, Ethan Tapper, and the Harvard Forest book, *New England Forests Through Time* by David R. Foster. Now I look for complexity in the forest, for example dead wood, gaps in the canopy, and multiple age classes. Forests are messy and they do not care about what looks aesthetically pleasing.

My time at the land trust has been diverse, almost every day is something new. An interesting project I have been working on is baseline documentation for a newly conserved property in Petersham. A baseline document is a report that talks about the condition of the property and what is currently there, so perhaps somebody 30 years from now could read it and understand what things were like. I was able to spend time taking note of boundary conditions, wildlife, and plant communities. I was even able to go to the Worcester Registry of Deeds and record the conservation restriction. Another interesting part of my internship is having the opportunity to work with two State Service Foresters. I have shadowed them and learned what a Service Forester does. For instance, they will work with loggers during a timber harvest to ensure the work being done is ecologically sound and complies with state regulations and best management practices. It is my goal to become a Forester someday. ■



## Hills of East Quabbin Ride

The second Ride raised over \$3,000 towards more conservation efforts throughout the region, thanks to the fifty riders who participated, braving another wet Saturday to explore the back roads of our region. The Ride started and finished at Farmer Matt's of New Braintree and offered beer from Lost Town's Brewing. There was a short (24.2 mile) loop and a long (47.5 mile) loop that went past several EQLT preserves including Pynchon's Grist Mill Preserve in West Brookfield, Wendemuth Meadow in North Brookfield, Deer Park and Mandell Hill in Hardwick. Riders also experienced a mile-long section of the Mass Central Rail Trail. ■









# The Pollinator Workforce

By Amy Trevvett

As anyone who has ever grown a vegetable garden can tell you, it's a lot of work. As much as it may seem that we move mountains (or at least many piles of compost) to produce fresh, homegrown veggies, the fact is that our efforts at self-sufficiency likely would be wasted if it wasn't for the army of small helpers that we so seldom notice – our pollinators.

Bees, butterflies, moths, birds, beetles, bats and other animals make up the vast “workforce” of pollinators who carry pollen where it needs to go, enabling food-source and flowering plants to reproduce. Without the pollinator workforce, many plant species would simply die off. From backyard gardeners to the industrial-scale farms across the U.S. that stock our grocery stores, we all rely on the pollinator workforce. In fact, three out of every four flowering plants are dependent on pollinators to reproduce, and scientists estimate that one in every three bites of food we eat exists because of pollinators.<sup>1</sup>

Scientific evidence has pointed to widespread pollinator declines over the past couple of decades, from bees to bats, butterflies and birds. In turn, the plants that they pollinate are also adversely affected. Together, these coinciding changes result in less biodiversity and species resilience. Pesticide use, habitat loss and fragmentation, diseases, and climate disruption are all factors contributing to pollinator declines. If these losses continue, there's the potential we could lose entire species of pollinators, like the endangered rusty patched bumblebee<sup>2</sup> or monarch butterflies<sup>3</sup>, to name just two.

**We can do something to help.**

- **Grow a variety of flowering pollinator-friendly plants that they can rely on as food across the seasons.** Not only do pollinator plants beautify a yard or community, they also serve as a smorgasbord of nectar, resins, oils, and other plant parts that attract and feed the pollinators who in turn transfer the pollen needed to create the next generation of plants, including some we eat. The EQLT website ([www.eqlt.org/pollinator-resources](http://www.eqlt.org/pollinator-resources)) has links explaining how to get started, seed collecting, and other useful resources.
- **Reducing, reusing, and repurposing (especially petroleum-based products like plastics) allow us to avoid carbon-emitting and energy-consuming**

**production processes as well as pollution associated with the transport of goods.** Recycling can also help limit drawing from finite supplies of Earth's raw materials, reducing habitat impacts.

- **Reducing or eliminating man-made pesticides, which kill the beneficial insects as well as harmful ones.** Opting for natural pest control methods like companion plantings that repel harmful insects, crop rotation, using species-specific pheromone traps, or spot-applications of neem oil or diatomaceous earth,<sup>4</sup> are some methods to help eliminate destructive insects while helping to minimize the impact to pollinators.

- **Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation are becoming more common as society deals with expanding populations and insufficient housing. Preserving open spaces, especially natural habitat and migration corridors, allow pollinators (and other wildlife) freedom of movement to access their life-sustaining food and water sources, as well as natural breeding habitats.**

EQLT strives to support pollinators across the seasons. So far this year, we have given out more than 100 mixed pollinator plant seed packets for people in our communities to start

(or add to!) their own pollinator beds. We are expanding our pollinator garden at Seven Acre Preserve in Petersham and designing a food forest alongside the Mass Central Rail Trail in Ware, which will support pollinator diversity. By making small adjustments in our everyday lives, we can all help support an environment in which pollinators not only survive, but thrive. ■

1. Klein AM, et al. Importance of pollinators in changing landscapes for world crops. *Proc Biol Sci.* 2007 Feb 7;274(1608):303-13. doi: 10.1098/rspb.2006.3721. PMID: 17164193; PMCID: PMC1702377.
2. Saving the rusty patch bumblebee – one garden at a time by Georgia Parham. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website: [www.fws.gov/story/saving-rusty-patch-bumble-bee](http://www.fws.gov/story/saving-rusty-patch-bumble-bee). Accessed June 19, 2025.
3. You can help save the monarch. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website: <https://www.fws.gov/initiative/pollinators/save-monarch>. Accessed June 19, 2025.
4. Tipsheet: Organic Pest Management. National Center for Appropriate Technology. <https://attra.ncat.org/publication/tipsheet-organic-pest-management/>. Accessed June 16, 2025.



*The Eastern Calligrapher (Toxomerus geminatus) is a type of hover fly native to the Eastern U.S. and Canada. They consume both nectar and pollen and are therefore great pollinators; their larvae are predators of common garden pests.*



# Who Blooms There? Part 2 - Wildflowers of EQLT

By Mike Stoll

Back by popular demand is our wildflower tour continuation: Summer Edition! While some of you are hitting the beaches and firing up the barbie, a few intrepid souls are hitting the bogs and firing up the bug repellent! In this edition we have a carnivorous plant and a sports car color (now I have your attention!).



**Sundew:** This is our second carnivorous plant this edition! Its diminutive size belies its huge personality. We have two species in our area, the round and spatula leafed versions. Both

form a rosette of specialized leaves with “tentacles” tipped with an attractant and “glue”. Like the pitcher plant the unwitting insects go for the attractant ... which may be their last step as they get stuck in the glue. The tentacles and then the leaves slowly envelop the bug and it is digested. After the process is completed the leaf and tentacles unfurl and they are ready for the next victim!

- Where: Traditional bogs (you may notice a recurring theme ... I like bogs ... call me crazy ...). They can be found at the Prince River Preserve in Barre.
- When: Blooms in July.
- Super Power: Forms a “hibernaculum” that the plant “retreats” into for winter protection and then reemerges in the spring.



**Touch-me-not:** Also known as jewel weed is a pretty nonstandard orange blossom this often pollinated by hummingbirds and bumblebees.

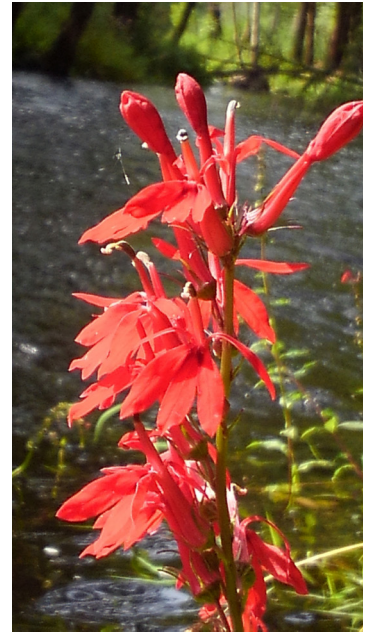
- Where: Look most anywhere along stream sides with muddy banks, floodplains and organic seeps. Hidden Meadow Preserve in

Hubbardston parking area has many in a small area.

- When: Late July and early August.
- Super Power: Has a creative seed dispersal strategy consisting of a “spring-loaded” seed pod that when touched “explodes” sending its seeds “flying”!

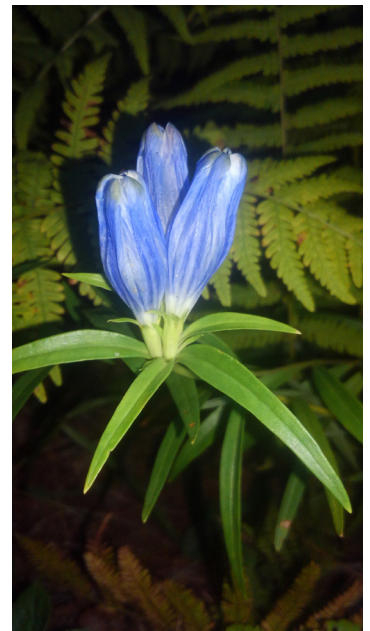
**Cardinal Flower:** An intense scarlet red flower is hard to miss. The flower consists of five lobes (two upper and 3 lower). If you want to see hummingbirds in the wild look for these ... the hummers love them!

- Where: Along streambanks and often found growing in shallow fast moving water. Search any Ware river tributary and you’ll have a good chance of finding them! Specifically, they’ve been seen along East Branch of the Ware River in Henry’s Grove Preserve in Hubbardston.
- When: Blooms in August.
- Fun Fact: Although not an orchid it is protected by the Orchid Act of 1935.



**Gentian:** An unmistakable flower with typically 3-6 clusters of vibrant blue-purple blooms whose petals never open. Only the strongest pollinators (usually bumblebees) can force their way in to pollinate! We have two species in species in our area the closed and narrow-leafed.

- Where: Find them in very rich organic soils near seeps and riverbanks. We have a thriving colony saved from the bulldozer at Hidden Meadow Preserve in Hubbardston.
- When: Blooms in mid-August to early September.
- Fun Fact: Automaker Porsche has a paint color called “Gentian Blue Metallic”. If anyone of you has a convertible Porsche in this color I’d love to take a ride with you ... of course, this would be purely for scientific and botanical reasons only!



Until next time... Buddy the flower sniffing poodle is taking a break! ■





*Caring for the Land that Sustains Us*

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## INSIDE:

**Conserving Land Along the Ware River  
Hills of East Quabbin Ride Photos**



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Barre, MA

# Station Loop Ramble

**Coming Sunday, October 19, 2025**

Including two kids runs (200 yards and 1/4-mile),  
5-Mile Classic and a 5k Run/Walk



**Register at [EQLT.org/station-loop-ramble](http://EQLT.org/station-loop-ramble)**

**ENTRY** Free—Ages 6 and under or \$10.00—Ages 7 - 12

**FEES:** \$25.00—Early bird online registration by October 17th  
(\$10 discount for seniors, veterans & first responders)  
\$30.00—Day-of Adult registration  
\$35.00—Family registration for up to six members!