

Piscataquog News

THE PISCATAQUOG LAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER



Proctor Project Nears Finish Line

Proctor land in Winter. Photo by Tom Jones.

With an April 30 fundraising deadline approaching, PLC is just \$1,800 away from securing all the funds needed to complete our Proctor land conservation project in Lyndeborough. PLC signed purchase and sale agreements on two properties owned by the Charles A. Proctor Trust in June 2017. Since then we have been working to raise \$300,000 in public and private funds to purchase the parcels, cover transaction and due diligence costs, and fund long-term stewardship. With the finish line in sight, the last dollars we still hope to raise will help us wrap up the land purchase, and create a modest fund for post-closing projects like trails, signage, etc.

The Proctor project aims to protect two critical properties totaling 112 acres that are key additions to the mosaic of conservation land that straddles Lyndeborough, New Boston and Franconia. The parcels connect over 1,500 acres of existing conservation property, including more than three hundred acres of abutting or close-by PLC properties. PLC was first attracted to the Proctor properties by their water resources: the two parcels contains nearly 5,000 feet of stream frontage on Cold and Scataquog Brooks, which drain to the South Branch of the Piscataquog River. New Hampshire Fish and Game has found an exemplary

native trout population in Scataquog Brook on one of the tracts. The properties' water resources also extend underground, with about 19 acres of the project lands overlying a stratified aquifer. Many funders have come together over the past nine months to make the Proctor project happen, including the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), which is providing half of all funding for the project, the Town of Lyndeborough, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the State Conservation Committee's Conservation ("Mooseplate") Grants Program, the Merrimack Conservation Partnership, and the Davis Conservation Foundation. A portion of the proceeds from the 2017 Rose Mountain Rumble bike benefit also went towards the Proctor campaign.

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The Proctor campaign got another huge boost in February 2018, when PLC received a surprise \$10,000 grant to the project from the Preston Family Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the latest in a series of grants made by the family to key PLC conservation projects. We are profoundly grateful to the Preston family for their generosity and belief in local land conservation.

With nearly all funds for the Proctor project in hand, PLC is wrapping up due diligence work (survey, environmental review, etc.) on the second of the two parcels to be acquired by from the Proctor Trust. The 71-acre property includes a key stretch of Cold Brook that will be the focus of stream restoration work once we own the land. We expect to close on the purchase of the tract in June. PLC already completed our purchase of the other 41-acre property from the Proctor Trust in December 2017 (see year-end wrap up on next page).



TO CONSERVE

the natural and scenic landscapes of the Piscataquog, Souhegan, and Nashua River watersheds of New Hampshire.

PLC



From My Corner

by Chris Wells, PLC President/Executive Director

A Recap of PLC's 47th Annual Meeting

The Piscataquog Land Conservancy held its 47th Annual Meeting on November 4th, 2017, at the Old Town Hall in Frankestown. The fifty or so PLC members in attendance heard reports on the organization's achievements during its 2017 fiscal year, and reviewed our financial status (for the details, see my Year in Review article in the Fall 2017 issue of this newsletter). The membership re-elected three members of the PLC Board of Trustees to a second term: Joslin Bennett of Henniker, Jess Charpentier of Henniker, and Ben Haubrich of Frankestown. PLC members also approved a slate of officers for 2017-18: Martha Sunderland of Henniker was re-elected as Chair, and Jim Shirley of Goffstown was approved as Vice Chair. Aaron Gill of Deering and Mike Boyko of Weare were elected as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Biographies of all of our board members can be found on the PLC website. PLC also bid a fond farewell to departing

two board members: William "Tuck" Tucker of Goffstown and Ted Graham of Frankestown. With the business portion of the meeting complete, I had the pleasure of presenting PLC's the 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award to Dave Butler of Bedford for his good work as a longtime volunteer easement monitor and all-around "pitch in" PLC person. The meeting concluded with the evening's guest speaker, Jess Charpentier who gave a talk on the use of prescribed fire as a land management tool in New England. All in all, it was an eventful and enjoyable meeting, and big thanks to the Town of Frankestown for letting us be the first renters of the newly-renovated Old Town Hall. Thanks also to all who brought food and drink to share. Hope to see you all again at PLC's 48th Annual Meeting this fall!

A Busy Close to 2017

In a flurry of December project closings, PLC added three more properties to our growing network of conservation lands. On December 19th, our long-time partners the Frankestown Land Trust (FLT) conveyed a conservation easement to PLC on a small but strategic parcel located at the confluence of the South Branch of the Piscataquog River and Brennan Brook in Frankestown. FLT had purchased the 7.5 acre property earlier in 2017, and the PLC easement reinforces its permanent protection. The parcel is part of larger 42-acre project led by FLT, and is a key piece of the larger mosaic of conserved land in the area.

On December 21st, PLC and the Town of Brookline completed the second phase of our joint conservation project along the Nissitissit River. The Town of Brookline conveyed a conservation easement to PLC on five tracts totaling 14 acres, several of which

were gifted to town by the Nissitissit River Land Trust and Beaver Brook Association. The land protects another third of a mile of frontage on the river, and nearly a mile of a popular rail trail. The town is planning a new universally-accessible river walk and fishing pier on part of the property. Brookline and PLC had previously protected two properties totaling 75 acres along the Nissitissit in June 2017.

In our last closing of the year, on December 29th PLC completed our purchase of a 41-acre property in Lyndeborough from the Proctor Trust. The land is located next to PLC's Rice Preserve, and features dramatic glacial eskers and a stretch of brook that supports an exemplary native trout population. PLC will be purchasing another nearby tract of 71 acres from the Proctors later this spring.

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Thank You PLC
 for all you do!

Going Above and Beyond for PLC

So much of PLC's good work is done by volunteers, and our public outings are a case in point: without the enthusiasm and generosity of many people we could not begin to offer all the walks, rides, and paddles we do each year. So here's a big shout out to the volunteers who planned and led outings over the past year: Mike Boyko, Dave Butler, Laura French, Ben Haubrich, Doria Harris, Kris Henry, Betsy and Ralph Holmes, John Kanter, Greg Kreider, Mike Larson, Mark Nieman, Doug Powers, Gary Samuels, Joel Stave, Nancy Stenho, Larry Sunderland, Barbara Thomson, Jeremy Turner, and Barry Wicklow. Thank you! While we are on the topic of people who go above and beyond for PLC, another big thank you to Jeff Jackson and everyone at Summit Computer Services for donating their skills and time to keeping our computers, network, email and website up, safe and running smoothly. Thanks also to Cindy Stave of Weber Stave Design for donating the graphic design that makes this newsletter look so great!



*Fannie Mae and her owner Dan Buczala
Photo by Bart Hunter*

On December 8th, a dozen dedicated human volunteers and one dedicated draft horse named Fannie Mae installed gates at PLC’s Rose Mountain Preserve in Lyndeborough. The heavy-duty steel gates are intended to stop the 4WD truck traffic that has caused significant damage to the property over the years. Because the access to the property is so bad the only way to get everything up the mountain was with people and animal power. Thanks to everyone who were part of this project across three different work days (you know who you are) and thank you Fannie Mae for skidding 1,600 lbs. of concrete up the mountain!



Volunteers building bridge on Tarr Sanctuary trail.

Nearly every weekend this past fall, a small, skilled crew of mountain bike enthusiasts were re-routing and improving trails at our Florence Tarr Wildlife Sanctuary in Bedford and Goffstown. When PLC acquired the Tarr land this past summer, we knew that unofficial biking and equestrian trails on the property could be a ready-made trail system for people to experience and enjoy the land. But the trails needed some work before they could be an official trail system. Thanks to the hundreds of volunteer hours put into the trails last fall, the Tarr Sanctuary trails will be ready to enjoy this spring. Thank you to the Tarr “trail guys!”

Join PLC for a walk on the Tarr trails on June 23rd



Tour group in front of log pile Photo by Jordan Bailey

The timber harvest at PLC’s 195-acre Tuthill Preserve in New Boston has wrapped up for the winter. The long-planned harvest got under way in late January, and was about 80% complete when work had to be suspended near the end of February due to an early thaw. The loggers performing the Tuthill harvest, D.H. Hardwick & Sons of Bennington, had another seven to ten days of work to go. As of now our plan is to have them come back in January 2019 to complete the harvest.

In the near-term, the Hardwicks and PLC’s foresters from Meadowsend Timberlands will come back once the ground has firmed up to put the roads and log landing “to bed” by installing water bars, seeding the landing etc. On February 10th nearly thirty people took a guided tour of the Tuthill harvest (see photo).

Acquired by PLC in 2003, the Tuthill Preserve is among our largest land ownerships, and is one of the best suited to forest management. PLC commissioned a forest inventory and management plan for the Tuthill Preserve in 2016. The plan was written by licensed foresters from Meadowsend Timberlands, which has extensive expertise in timber management on conserved properties. The Meadowsend foresters mapped out and marked the harvest in the summer and fall of 2017, and supervised the cutting and hauling of the timber this winter.

PLC Adopts New Strategic Plan

In August 2017, the Piscataquog Land Conservancy adopted its latest five year strategic plan for the organization, covering 2018-2022. The document's introductory sections are excerpted below.

Our Purpose

In 1970 a group of visionary citizens concerned about the rapid urbanization of their corner of southern New Hampshire founded the Piscataquog Watershed Association (PWA). Its purpose was to protect the natural resources of the 12-town Piscataquog River watershed by conserving strategic properties through purchase or easement. In 2008 PWA became the Piscataquog Land Conservancy (PLC), and in 2015 the organization expanded its service area to include another 11 towns in the Souhegan and Nashua River watersheds.

Our Mission

The Piscataquog Land Conservancy works to conserve the natural and scenic environment of its southern New Hampshire communities for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

Our Vision

New Hampshire in general and the PLC region in particular, comprise a rural region characterized by large tracts of forests, small farms, and small towns and villages. The PLC region, the Piscataquog, Souhegan and Nashua River watersheds, fall within the orbit of rapid urban development radiating from Boston as well as Manchester and Nashua. The increasing cost of living in the urban centers coupled with ease of transport and telecommuting, combined with a desire to live in a more rural setting and enjoy all that it offers is exerting a growing pressure on undeveloped land.

The PLC trusts that preserved aquifers, forests and agricultural parcels continue to perform essential environmental services and help to maintain the rural character of living we presently enjoy. The conserved parcels will contribute to cleaner air and water while continuing to provide access to traditional New England activities such as snowshoeing, skiing, hiking, walking, hunting and fishing along with other 'outdoor' pursuits. We feel these activities, being enjoyed in a natural and unpolluted environment, contribute significantly to the region's quality of life.

Future residents will share this preserved land with plants and animals that may otherwise be threatened or lost if open space is not protected. Forested lands protected by the PLC will continue to be harvested using sustainable methods that are consistent with their preservation. Protected agricultural lands will provide for small-scale farming that is beneficial now and of continued importance into the future. These farms will provide locally produced fruits, vegetables, dairy goods and other non-edible items such as Christmas trees and most of the pumpkins grown locally today.

Fulfilling the Vision

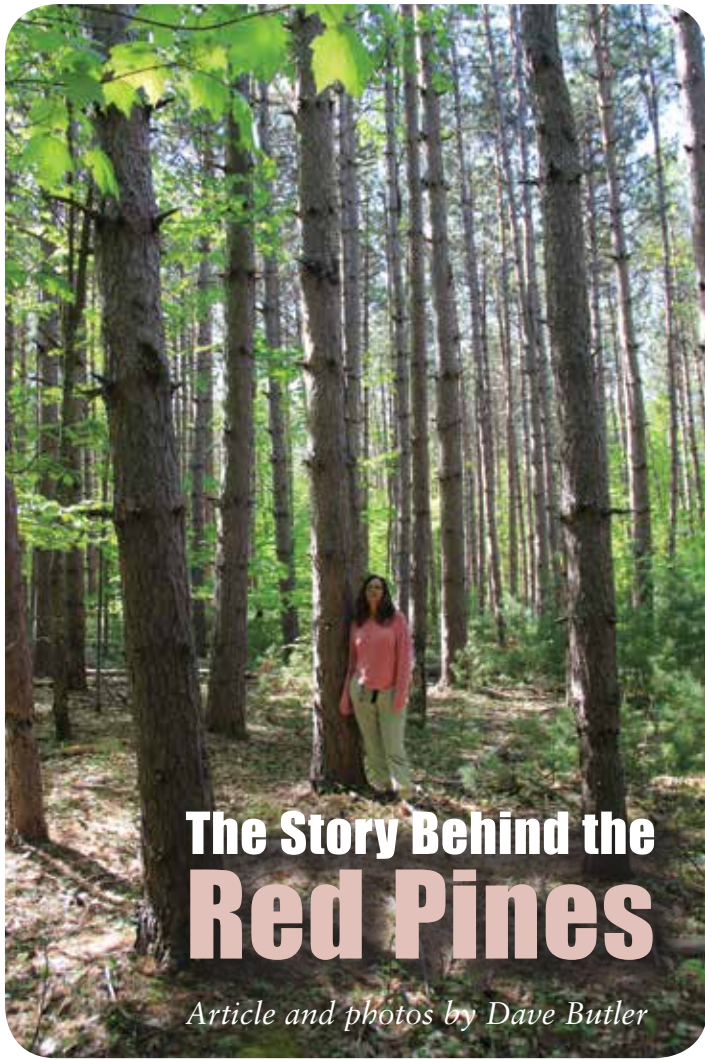
From its inception in 1970, PLC has worked hard in pursuit of this vision. By 2012, when the last Strategic Plan was adopted, PLC had protected 89 properties totaling 5,075 acres of conservation land in 12 towns. Five years later PLC has added 17 properties totaling 1,788 acres, and as of July 2017 held fee land and easements on 106 tracts totaling 6,863 acres. PLC has also added 11 towns to its service area in late 2015, bringing the total to 23 towns served. PLC's accomplishments in meeting its land protection, stewardship and outreach goals has given us the confidence to apply for Land Trust Alliance Accreditation, which was awarded in August 2017.

PLC's future is bright, but there are substantial challenges ahead to maintain the scope and high quality of its services. Though the foundation is solid, success will demand new efforts, new resources, and new strategies. Our capacity is strong; PLC currently has two full-time and two part-time staff, along with more than 75 dedicated volunteers, but may need to expand in the years ahead.

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To read the rest of the PLC's strategic plan, visit www.plcnh.org



The Story Behind the Red Pines

Article and photos by Dave Butler

PLC's Brooks/Boyle conservation easement

In his book *Reading the Forested Landscape*, ecologist Tom Wessels writes that if you find a stand of red pines in New England that is not in its natural setting (dry, rocky slopes), then the trees were almost surely planted. Take the red pines at PLC's Jon Brooks conservation easement in New Boston. If you walk northwest along the trail that runs through the property, at the top of the hill you'll find numerous red pines on your right, but no red pines on your left. Since the pines are not growing on a dry, rocky slope, but rather in an abandoned farm field, it's a good bet that the red pines were planted here. Another big clue is that they stand in straight rows! The red pines on the Brooks property occupy the sloping portion of the old field, suggesting that they were planted to stabilize the soil on the hillside.

Red pine was planted extensively in abandoned farm fields across New Hampshire by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) from the 1930s into the early 40s, and government-encouraged planting continued postwar well into the 1960s. In addition to holding down the soil of worn-out fields, red pine was promoted as fast-growing "cash crop" tree that unlike white pine was not susceptible to pine weevil and pine blister rust. Ironically, old red pine plantations in NH are today falling victim to the invasive red pine scale.

Another good example of a red pine plantation in our area can be found near the summit of The Pinnacle in Lyndeboro, near PLC's Rose Mountain Preserve. Vincent State Forest in Weare also has extensive red pine and Norway spruce plantations, and is a good place to see the abrupt change between a pure plantation and adjacent forest that naturally "belongs" on the site.

Another mid-20th century approach to red pine planting was "scarify and strew," which as its name implies entails loosening the soil and then distributing seeds randomly rather than in rows. In our area, this method was used on a large scale by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Hopkinton Flood Control project, which was constructed in the early 1960s. You can find red pine stands at Clough State Park in Weare, on the shores of Hopkinton Lake, and at the Henniker flood plain. This method of red pine generation was also used on a smaller scale by land-owners and 4-H clubs throughout the state.

For all this history of human intervention, sometimes you find red pines in surprising places that were not planted by people. At PLC's Florence Tarr Wildlife Sanctuary in Bedford and Goffstown, large red pines can be found here and there in the eastern part of the property, in areas which are not dry, rocky slopes. A review of my tree books gave me a broader definition of red pine habitat: red pine thrives on light, acid, sandy soils, and does well on shallow, less-fertile soils. The soil analysis map of the Tarr Sanctuary shows that the red pines occur in areas of sandy or loamy-over-sandy soils. So as far as I can tell, in this case humans did not plant the trees, but still did their part by providing less fertile soil (from intensive farming), and a full-sun environment (abandoned fields) which is required for red pine growth.

Dave Butler is a PLC volunteer property monitor, and was named PLC's Volunteer of the Year in 2017.



Pinnacle Mountain



Clough State Park



Top: Tarr Wildlife Sanctuary
Bottom: Vincent State Forest



ROSE MOUNTAIN RUMBLE

RETURNS AUGUST 25TH

Photo by Doria Harris

PLC'S ROSE MOUNTAIN RUMBLE BENEFIT CYCLING EVENT RETURNS TO THE BACK ROADS OF LYNDEBOROUGH AND SURROUNDING TOWNS ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 25TH, 2018.

Last year's Rumble attracted over one hundred riders, and we're expecting to see another bump up in ridership this year. The 2018 Rumble will once again welcome riders of every ability, offering a variety of loops including a full 100K course to challenge the most hardened "gravel grinder." All routes will be marked and cue sheets (and GPX files) will be provided to every rider. As in past years, the ride will begin and end at the Lyndeborough Center Hall and the now-legendary post-ride lunch will again be prepared by the Wilton-Lyndeborough Women's Club. The cost to register for the RMR is \$65 through May 31st, then goes up to \$85 on June 1st. Registration includes lunch, and if you register by August 10th, a super-cool Rose Mountain Rumble tee-shirt.

Net proceeds benefit the Piscataquog Land Conservancy. To learn more about the Rumble and to register, please visit www.rosemountainrumble.com.

Not riding but would like to participate? We need volunteers! We have a variety of fun and easy volunteer jobs, and time slots in the morning, midday, and late afternoon. So come have some fun, support local land conservation, and meet some great people. If you time it right, you'll even get an amazing lunch! Interested? Contact Doria Harris at doria.harris@gmail.com. Want to be a business sponsor of the Rose Mountain Rumble? Call Chris Wells at 487-3331.

GET READY TO RUMBLE!



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The Piscataquog Land Conservancy (PLC) is a 501(c)(3) registered in the State of New Hampshire. Our federal tax ID number is 23-7085677. Information regarding the PLC, including our recent financial reports and tax filings, is readily available upon request.

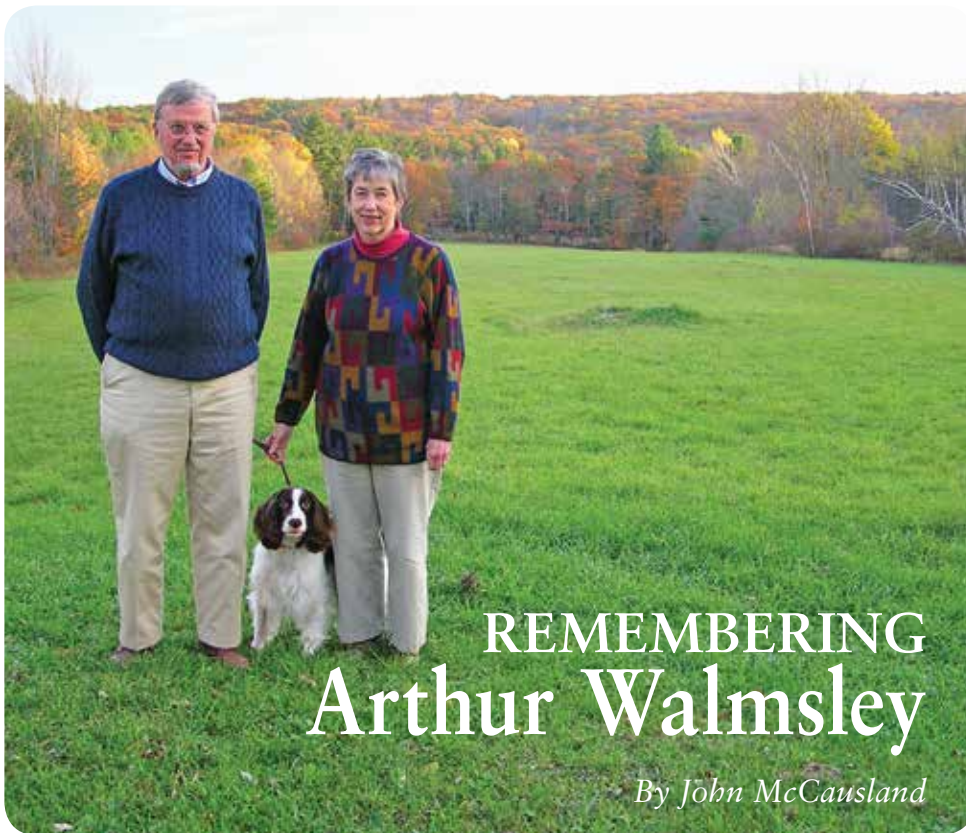


Photo by Pat Nelson

Spirituality is an overworked word these days, but there is a spirituality of land conservation and environmentalism. It has to do with a sense of place, of course: locating ourselves in the context of nature, in the created world of which we are a part, stewards rather than exploiters of what we see as gift, not conquest. It has to do with the need to nurture, not simply to consume. And it also has to do with a sense of time, an appreciation for the long horizons of seasons, the slow evolution of landscape and creatures, our own mortality, the heritage that one generation passes to another. It has to do with beauty, reverence, peace and, indeed, holiness.

Arthur Walmsley, a leader of the Episcopal Church and longtime member of the PLC family, died this past October at the age of eighty-nine. Arthur was a man whose working life centered in cities: St. Louis, where he began his career as an Episcopal priest in an urban parish after the Second World War; New York, where he worked in the crisis years of the civil rights movement and Vietnam; Hartford, where he served as Bishop of Connecticut, the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church. Bishop Walmsley was for a generation a towering figure not only in his own denomination but in the ecumenical community—a leader in civil rights, in global reconciliation, in the empowerment of women and gay people.

Even as his work took him around the world, Bishop Walmsley returned as often as he could to his chosen spiritual retreat, a small farm in Deering that he and his wife Roberta purchased in 1961. Originally settled in 1780, the farm first served as a

REMEMBERING Arthur Walmsley

By John McCausland

Even as his work took him around the world, Bishop Walmsley returned as often as he could to his chosen spiritual retreat, a small farm in Deering that he and his wife Roberta purchased in 1961.

It was this beloved place that Arthur and Roberta put under conservation easement with the Piscataquog Land Conservancy in 2007.

summer place, then became their year around home upon Arthur's retirement from the church in 1993. The heart of North Farm was the woodshed they converted into their living room, lined with bookcases, Roberta's piano in one corner, windows looking out on acres of meadow and woodland. It was this beloved place that Arthur and Roberta put under conservation easement with the Piscataquog Land Conservancy in 2007. At just 14 acres, North Farm is not a large tract, yet it connects with many more acres of protected land that comprise a substantial portion of the town of Deering. Arthur was enormously proud to be part of this conservation effort and spoke of it often.

In retirement, Arthur served on the board of PLC and on the Deering Conservation Commission. He also continued to provide spiritual direction, and among those whom he nurtured was Steve Blackmer, a career NH environmentalist who became an Episcopal priest and founded Kairos Earth and the Church of the Woods in Canterbury, NH. Arthur saw environmentalism as linked to social justice and world peace, and knew that what is done at home is connected to what happens in the greater world, that the environment is linked to the human soul.

Arthur Walmsley died as he wished, in his home, in his bed, in his sleep. His last illness was brief, a bout of pneumonia in the hospital, and though it left him severely weakened, he insisted on returning home and, in his final few days, took particular joy in gazing out on the land he and Roberta had protected—delighting that the meadow had been freshly mowed, that the trees at its edges were gleaming yet again with reds and golds. It was his deep joy that this piece of God's creation would be protected into future generations; as a home for Roberta, a summer retreat for his son and daughter and their eventual retirement place, and for generations yet unborn.

John McCausland is the retired vicar of Holy Cross Church in Weare, and a former member and chair of the PLC Board of Trustees.



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Upcoming Walks & Events

For dates, times and details, visit www.plcnh.org

May 5 / Rail Trail Walk, Brookline

May 6 / Spring Wildflowers, Goffstown

June 5 / Parents and Kids Walk, Henniker

June 23 / Explore the Tarr Sanctuary, Bedford & Goffstown

August 25 / 4th Annual Rose Mountain Rumble, Lyndeborough

September 3, Labor Day / 10th Annual Lobster by the River, New Boston

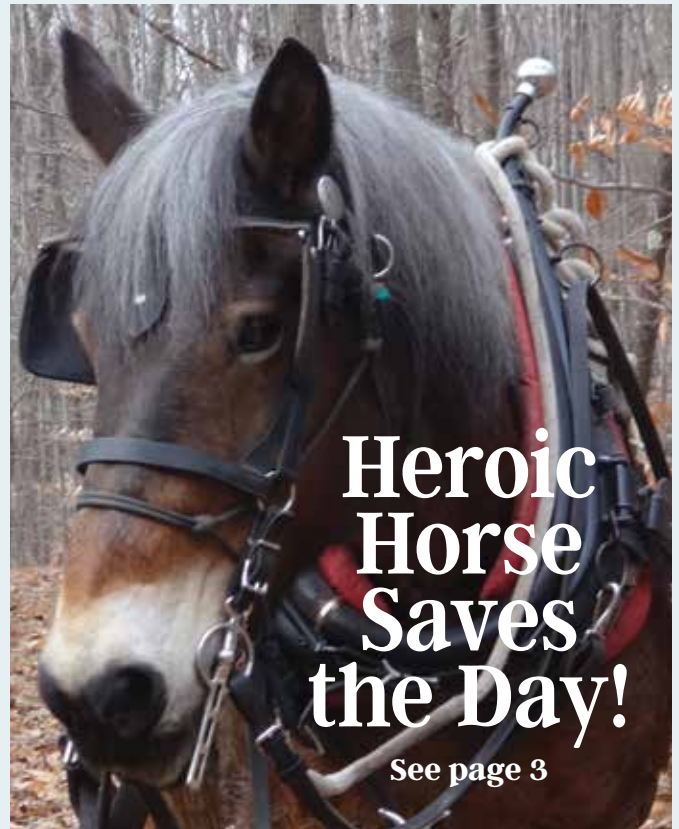
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**Heroic
Horse
Saves
the Day!**

See page 3