

# Piscataquog News

THE PISCATAQUOG LAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER



## PLC Launches Nissitissit Headwaters project in Mason

In one of our most ambitious conservation projects to date, the Piscataquog Land Conservancy has entered into a purchase agreement to buy 274 acres of forest, streams and wetlands in the town of Mason. The property is a top conservation priority for the town, and its protection is crucial to completing a decades-long effort to protect the headwaters of the Nissitissit River. The Nissitissit is a main tributary of the Nashua River that flows through Brookline and Hollis, and was given National Wild and Scenic River status in 2018. PLC has previously worked with the Town of Brookline to conserve key parcels along the river's mainstem.

The land PLC hopes to buy is located in northeast corner of Mason off Abbott Hill Road. When it came on the market earlier this year, a conservation-minded interim buyer stepped in to quickly purchase the land before it could be bought for development. PLC's purchase agreement is with the interim buyer. If the conservation purchase by PLC is unsuccessful the current owner will have to place the parcel back on the market. Development of the property would significantly impact its extensive streams and wetlands, upland habitat, as well as aquatic systems downstream. We have until the end of June 2020 to raise \$650,000 and close the purchase.

The Nissitissit Headwaters property contains over 2,400 feet of perennial streams, including the source of Spaulding Brook, one of the two uppermost headwater streams of the Nissitissit drainage. The other is Mitchell Brook, which has already been largely protected through the conservation of surrounding land. A wetlands inventory of the property documented nearly twenty-five acres of wetlands, including thirty-four vernal pools. The 2015 NH Wildlife Action Plan designates about half of the land as best-in-state wildlife habitat, with the other half ranking as best in the southern New Hampshire region.

The property directly abuts the Town of Mason's Spaulding Brook Conservation Area and Doonan property, and builds on the larger protection effort in the Nissitissit headwaters along Spaulding and Mitchell Brooks, which has to date protected over 1,700 acres of land held by the Town of Mason, the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, and the Town of Milford. The proposed project would also expand conservation to the north and west towards another 1,800 acres of nearby protected land centered on Russell-Abbott State Forest in Wilton.

The success of the Nissitissit Headwaters conservation project hinges on PLC receiving major grants from two state funding programs: the Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) fund, which is administered by the NH Department of Environmental Services, and the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). PLC has applied to both grant programs and will hear back later this fall. If these large "anchor" grants come through, PLC will seek to raise the balance of funding for the project from the Town of Mason's conservation fund, private grants and local fundraising.

PLC's President Chris Wells says "beginning with grassroots efforts to clean up the Nashua River in the late 1960s, local conservationists have been working for more than 50 years to restore the Nashua river and preserve the wildness of its upper reaches. The Nissitissit Headwaters project is the latest chapter in this story, and we are proud to be part of it."



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

## The Piscataquog Land Conservancy will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2020.

As we approach this milestone, we can take pride that an organization founded by a handful of citizen volunteers in 1970 has grown to become one of New Hampshire's most effective and respected land trusts.

The last fifteen years have seen tremendous growth in our reach and impact. In 2003, PLC's lands and easements totaled about 1,300 acres. That year the organization hired its first paid staff person — a do-it-all executive director. In 2012 we added a dedicated land protection position, and in 2014 a stewardship staff person. In 2015, PLC expanded our service area to include the eleven towns that comprise the Souhegan and Nashua River watersheds.

PLC's policies and practices improved apace, through the adoption of national standards and practices developed by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), enrolling our lands in the TerraFirma legal defense insurance program in 2013, and earning national Land Trust Accreditation in 2017. The impact of professionalization has been dramatic: in 2019, PLC's conservation lands and easements passed the 7,000-acre mark.

None of this organizational growth would have been possible if the PLC community of volunteers had not also expanded to monitor more properties, build and maintain more trails, lead public walks, serve on committees, and

organize fundraising events. PLC's growth also could not have happened without the generosity of our members and other financial supporters. The net result is a professional organization that works to the highest national standards, yet remains local, responsive, and rooted in volunteerism. It's a pretty great place to be.

Looking forward to **FIFTY**

"...the future of PLC and the lands we care for depends on all of us."

Looking ahead to PLC's next fifty years, protecting land before it is lost must remain our fundamental mission. The region we serve is the most densely-settled and fastest-growing corner of New Hampshire, and we only have so much time left to conserve the lands that underpin our local environment and give our communities their character.

Yet with every property we conserve we also make a promise to care for, and when

necessary defend, the land in perpetuity. For this commitment to be credible, we must have the human and financial resources to monitor, manage, and legally defend our lands and easements. Because our time horizon is literally forever, this capacity must also be sustained regardless of future economic conditions, political and cultural trends, competing land uses, and environmental change.

Lastly, we must strive to bring more people into this organization, whether they are adults looking for opportunities to contribute to a cause they care about, families seeking to connect with the outdoors and with each other, or young people who want to learn, have fun and feel useful. Again, forever is a long time, and the future of PLC and the lands we care for depends on all of us.

We will spend 2020 looking back at our achievements, honoring the people that made the Piscataquog Land Conservancy what it is today, and charting our course for the next half century. For a preview of what's planned for our 50th Anniversary year, come to PLC's Annual Meeting on November 2nd, and bring a friend!

## Welcome Hailey!

In late May, Hailey Nase joined PLC's staff as Stewardship Coordinator. Hailey is responsible for working with PLC's volunteer monitors to ensure that PLC's lands and conservation easements are monitored annually — last year PLC volunteers spent over five hundred hours monitoring 108 properties! Hailey also organizes and oversees land management projects like trail building, signage, etc., and responds to any issues that arise on our properties through the year. Hailey is a Weare New Hampshire native, and holds a BA in Environmental Studies from Ithaca College. Her previous conservation experience includes working with The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire, the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability in Ithaca, NY and the Finger Lakes Land Trust in Ithaca, NY. Hailey is thrilled to be back in New Hampshire, and we are thrilled to have her on the PLC team!



## Fall Volunteer Trail Days

PLC is working to expand our network of trails, and we can't do it without the help of volunteers. Does marking trails, clearing debris, constructing kiosks, and trekking through the woods sound fun and exciting to you? If yes, contact Hailey Nase at [hnase@plcnh.org](mailto:hnase@plcnh.org). Once on the email list, you will be notified with upcoming trail days and other opportunities to get involved with PLC. Experience with trail maintenance and/or property monitoring is not required, however, you must be physically able to hike on uneven terrain. We are hoping to schedule two trail days this fall.



# Meadowsend Land Protected in Weare

Photo by Karen Broemme

**T**his summer the Piscataquog Land Conservancy completed its acquisition of the Meadowsend property — 205 acres of forest and pristine wetlands in the town of Weare. PLC had worked for more than a year to raise all the funds needed to purchase the property. Now that PLC owns the land, we will manage it in perpetuity to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, provide public recreation and support sustainable forestry. The land is a true gem, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who came together to make its protection possible.

Located almost a mile into the woods from the nearest paved road, the property is thickly forested, with a string of beaver ponds and wetlands running north-south running down the center of the property. Water flows north through the wetlands to the main branch of the Piscataquog River. The land's wetlands are home to waterfowl, otter, mink, and beaver, while its upland forests are roamed by moose, black bear and bobcat. The property also features a grove of black gum trees approximately four hundred years in age.

The newly-protected land links 473 acres of existing conservation land owned by PLC and the Town of Weare. PLC plans to extend existing walking trails on its abutting Ferrin Pond Preserve onto the new property. Snowmobile access to an existing corridor trail will also continue under a maintenance agreement with the local snowmobile club.

PLC raised a total of \$296,000 for the land purchase. This funding was anchored by a \$185,000 grant from the state's Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) grants program. Administered by the N.H. Department of Environmental Services, the Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund focuses on the conservation and restoration of wetlands and other aquatic resources. Its funding

comes from mitigation payments made by building or transportation projects that impact wetlands.

The ARM program's coordinator Lori Sommer said "we were pleased to provide funding to protect this outstanding property. It contains high quality wetlands, a pristine headwater stream,

mature hardwood forests, and links to other conservation land. Wildlife that will benefit include waterfowl, beaver, otter and mink as well as potential turtle species important in the area."

Another key funder was the Weare-based Emma Sawyer Trust, which contributed \$50,000 towards the land purchase. Lynda Fiala of the Weare Trustees of Trust Funds said "we were pleased to support this project because it will benefit the citizens of Weare with recreational access to the land for hiking, hunting, fishing and snowmobiling. The conservation of the property also protect acres of wetlands and numerous vernal pools that help maintain the local ecosystem. "

Additional funding for the project came from the Fields Pond Foundation, the Merrimack Conservation Partnership, the Mildred Hall Trust, the William P. Wharton Trust, and an anonymous foundation. Private contributions from local residents rounded out the funding mix.

PLC purchased the land from Meadowsend Timberlands (MTL), a New Hampshire-based company that owns and manages working forestland throughout the state and New England. The French family (partners of MTL) said "our late father Bob French, who was the founder of Meadowsend Timberlands and an early supporter of PLC when it was the Piscataquog Watershed Association, would be really pleased to see this project happen." In honor of this historic connection, PLC has named the property the Bob French Woodlands Preserve.

**PLC will manage the Meadowsend property in perpetuity to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, provide public recreation and support sustainable forestry.**

**The land is a true gem, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who came together to make its protection possible.**

# PLC Supporters Honor Roll Fiscal Year 2019

(July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019) Please note that donations received after June 30, 2019, will appear in next year's honor roll.

**Did you know?** Nearly all of PLC's operating income comes from the annual contributions of people like you, one gift at a time. Last year we were supported by almost 400 individuals, families, foundations and businesses who "act locally" to protect the natural resources of the region they call home. We work hard to keep our fundraising requests to a minimum - we write our members just twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring as we approach the end of our fiscal year. This allows us to spend our time, and your money, on our mission instead of fundraising mailings - and that's the way we all like it! To learn more about how you can financially support PLC, including monthly "sustainer" gifts, gifts of stock, and making PLC part of your estate plan, contact Chris Wells at 487-3331 or cwells@plcnh.org.

## PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

### \$15,000+

Anonymous  
Jane B. Cook 1992 Charitable Trust  
Goffstown Conservation Commission 🐾  
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New Boston Conservation Commission 🐾  
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🐾 **SUSTAINING SUPPORTER**  
(Has a monthly contribution with automatic payment)

🐾 **LIFETIME PLC MEMBER**  
(Donated a conservation easement to PLC)

🐾 **PISCATAQUOG LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBER**  
(Has donated land to PLC or included PLC in their estate plans)

🐾 **DONATED TO LAND PROJECTS**

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# PLC Supporters Honor Roll Fiscal Year 2019

(continued)

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In memory of Ron Curran  
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In memory of  
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In memory of Robert L.V. French  
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In memory of Tom Pine  
Marcy Stanton  
In honor of all who enjoy and love  
the natural world  
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In memory of Fred Romani Opie  
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RiverStone Resources LLC  
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## LAND PROJECTS

### Jennings Conservation Easement Goffstown

Goffstown Conservation Commission  
State of NH -  
Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund  
(ARM)

### Bob French Woodlands Preserve (Meadowsend) Weare

Anonymous  
Rosemary & Chris Conroy  
Charles and Ethel Eastman Fund  
Emma Sawyer Trust  
Fields Pond Foundation  
Patricia & Timothy Finn  
Merrimack Conservation Partnership  
Pat Nelson  
Beth Salerno & Tod Ramseyer  
Lucius Sorrentino  
State of NH -  
Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund  
(ARM)  
William P. Wharton Trust

### Hobart-Fessenden Woods Conservation Easement Brookline

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Drew & Elizabeth Kellner  
Henry & Virginia Kellner  
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Greg Reny  
Peter Smith  
Marion Stoddart  
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Fred & Neila Daggett  
Roger Dignard  
Tania Emerson  
Floyd Guyette & Mary Koon  
Matthew Kuncik  
Pat Nelson  
New Boston Conservation Commission  
Michael Nolen  
Graham & Pam Pendlebury  
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Alan Shuman & Judith Hull  
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Megan Thomas & Duncan Coakley  
Barbara A. Thomson  
Fred & Marie Williams



## PLC OFFICE

603.487.3331

**President/Executive Director**  
Chris Wells

**Land Protection Specialist**  
Tom Jones

**Development Coordinator**  
Donna Seidel

**Stewardship Coordinator**  
Hailey Nase

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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.



## A Family's Conservation Legacy in New Boston

Photo by Tom Jones

The Piscataquog Land Conservancy has completed its purchase of a thirty-acre forested property along the Middle Branch of the Piscataquog River in New Boston. The land abuts PLC's 55-acre George Thomas Wildlife Sanctuary, and is also close to its Tuthill Woodlands Preserve and forest land owned by the town. The new PLC acquisition protects another seven hundred feet of frontage on the Middle Branch.

The land's owners, Larry Houghton and his wife Sandi, first approached PLC in the spring of 2018 as they were preparing to sell their home and land. Their hope was to divide the western thirty acres from their forested property and convey it to PLC. PLC paid for a surveyor to create a subdivision plan which was reviewed and approved by the New Boston Planning Board. Once the plan was approved, PLC could complete the purchase, which closed in late June. Under PLC's ownership, the land will remain in a natural state and be open to the public for non-motorized recreation, including hunting and fishing.

The project had a total cost of just under \$52,000, including the purchase price of the land, survey, legal and other transaction costs, and a contribution to PLC's long-term land stewardship fund. \$30,000 came from the New Boston's Conservation Fund,

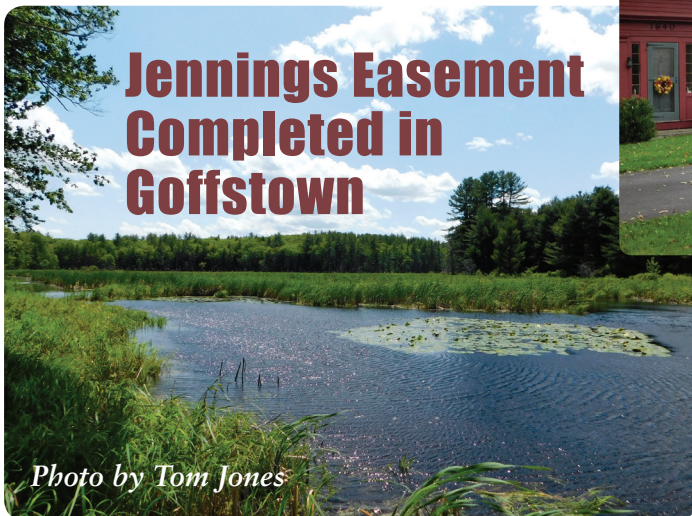
and PLC contributed \$19,000 from the proceeds from a recent timber harvest at its Tuthill Preserve. About \$3,000 in private contributions rounded out the funding.

Laura Bernard, Chairman of the New Boston Conservation Commission says "the New Boston Conservation Commission, along with the Open Space sub-committee led by Ken Lombard, are always looking for ways to help residents protect land in its natural state. With our limited resources, we don't

always have the ability to identify property owners and/or work with folks to come up with the best plan for their situation. When the PLC reached out to us and suggested we partner with them on the Houghton acquisition, we were more than happy to provide the funding that ultimately made this project work."



Larry Houghton says "I am happy that I am fortunate enough to be able to give something back to the community that I grew up in. I truly believe with all of my heart that preserving natural areas is essential. I am glad that the Piscataquog Land Conservancy will be protecting this wonderful natural area. My family has been part of the New Boston culture for a very, very long time. Many of my relatives have had or do have a deep connection with nature, and it's exciting to share the conservation of this land under the Houghton family name."



## Jennings Easement Completed in Goffstown

Photo by Tom Jones



On June 27th, PLC purchased a conservation easement on 41 acres of fields, forest, streams and wetlands along Paige Hill Road in Goffstown. The land is owned by Fred and Sylvia Jennings, who have farmed and lived on the historic property for decades. The

new PLC easement includes several acres of prime wetland in Paige Hill Marsh, and 1,400 feet of riparian frontage on Harry Brook and a tributary stream that flows through Paige Hill Marsh. Funding for the easement purchase came from the NH DES Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund and Goffstown's Conservation Fund.



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## Upcoming Outings & Events

Oct 13 / Hiking Rand Brook Forest, Frankestown

Oct 19 / Trail Dedication and Walk at Black Brook Preserve, Goffstown

Nov 2 / Explore the Bob French Woodlands Preserve, Weare

Nov 2 / PLC's 49th Annual Meeting, New Boston

For the latest on PLC outings, subscribe to our e-news. Just click the "join our mailing list" button at the bottom of our website: [www.plcnh.org](http://www.plcnh.org).

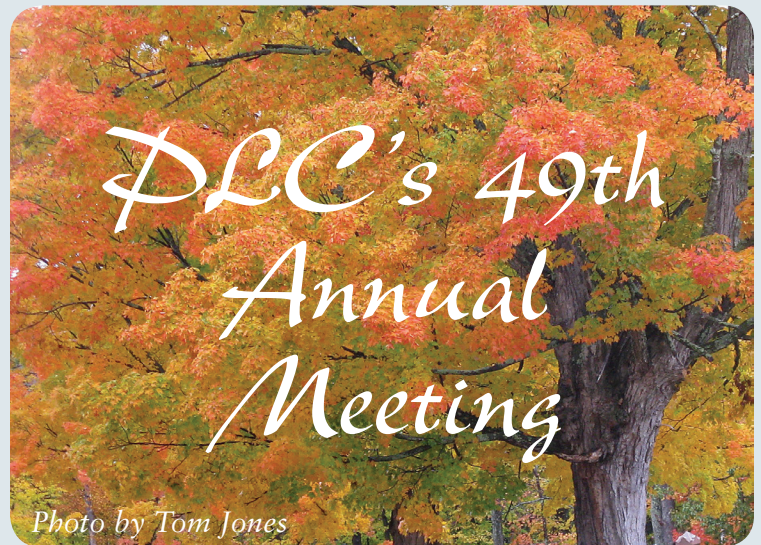
Fall | Winter 2019 Volume 31, No.2

# Piscataquog News

THE PISCATAQUOG LAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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**Saturday, November 2, 2019 | 4-7 PM**

Russell Room | Whipple Free Library | New Boston

Our Featured Speaker:

**David Brooks**

Science reporter for The Concord Monitor, blogger at Granite Geek, contributor at NHPR — and PLC volunteer property monitor!