



SPRING | SUMMER  
2021

# Piscataquog News

View from the top of Gregg Hill in Deering

THE PISCATAQUOG LAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

## New PLC Easement Protects Land in Deering

Story & Photos by Gary Samuels

Later this spring the Piscataquog Land Conservancy will accept a conservation easement from the Town of Deering on four town-owned properties totaling about ninety acres. Three of the lots are in the central part of town on the northeastern side of Deering Reservoir. The reservoir, also known as Deering Lake, forms the source of the North Branch of the Piscataquog River. The three properties comprise about 25 acres and include approximately 1,800 feet of frontage on two streams that empty directly into the reservoir. The fourth lot to be protected by the new easement comprises 65 acres at the western end of Deering in the Contoocook River watershed. Once the conservation easement is completed later this spring, PLC will have protected about 270 acres in Deering.

The town of Deering was first settled by Europeans in the late 18th century, and the three central lots to be protected by the PLC easement are in one of the earliest settled sections of town. The best known of these is Gregg Hill, named after the early family that built their homestead on what is one of the highest points in town. The 1,300-foot hill overlooks two of the parcels to be protected by the PLC easement, which locals lump together as the “Gregg Hill lot.” The property hosted one of the earliest rope tow ski hills in the state, remaining in operation until 1960.

The former ski slope is now a meadow, replete with blueberries and wildflowers. The southerly view from the top of the slope takes in the historic town hall building in Deering’s center, Deering Reservoir

**Once the conservation easement is completed later this spring, PLC will have protected about 270 acres in Deering.**

and, in the near distance, Crotched Mountain, with Rose Mountain on the horizon. Deering’s Conservation Commission is in the process of developing a pollinator garden with walking paths on the Gregg Hill lot, making of it a recreational and educational “destination” in central Deering.



The third of the central Deering lots to be protected by PLC easement lies across NH Rt 149 from the Gregg Hill lot and is known locally as one of the Carew lots. Approximately 740 feet of another unnamed stream runs through a deep, steep-sided gorge into a wetland and then into Deering Lake. This land was purchased by the town in 2008 with the intention that it would be conserved, a wish that will be fulfilled by PLC’s conservation easement.

The fourth parcel in the PLC conservation easement comprises about 65 acres that drains directly into the Contoocook River, making it the fifth property in the Contoocook watershed to be protected by PLC. The parcel is in an area of western Deering formerly known as ‘the Long Woods’ and is named for

Edward Ferris, Jr., who donated the land to the town of Deering for conservation purposes in 2005. The Ferris tract contains 57 acres of habitat-rich forested peatland and is part of a larger corridor of conserved forest that is nearly five miles long and spans two watersheds.

*Gary Samuels of Deering is a member of PLC’s Board of Trustees and Land Protection Committee*



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

# Spring at last



Cindy Stave



Donna Seidel

A long and difficult winter is finally behind us, and PLC heads into spring with several exciting land protection projects nearing completion. They include a partnership with New Boston to place conservation easements on hundreds of acres of town forest, a strategic addition to the mosaic of protected land in Goffstown, and the permanent protection of about ninety acres of town land in Deering. As these projects are completed, PLC's land and easement holdings will grow to nearly 9,300 acres by this summer. The good news doesn't stop there. Thanks to the recent acceleration of covid vaccinations, our staff will be back together in our New Boston office in early May. If public health trends remain positive, we hope to begin offering public recreational outings again in June. Volunteer trail projects are once again in the works. The date has been set for the 6th Annual Rose Mountain Rumble benefit ride this August. At long last, we can look forward to renewing the human connections that are as much a part of our work as conserving acres.

This spring also brings a couple of significant transitions for PLC. Our colleague and friend Donna Seidel will be retiring in May, after more than seven years as our development coordinator. Donna has been the friendly and helpful voice on the phone, the smile across

the event registration table, the IT trouble-shooter, the self-taught webmaster, the colleague who was always ready to pitch in, no matter the task. We will miss you Donna, and between road trips out west please come visit us! PLC also extends a truly heartfelt thank you and job well done to Cynthia Stave of New Boston, who for thirty years (yes you read that right) donated her graphic design skills to the Piscataquog News. After warning us more than a year ago that she was throttling back her graphic design commitments, she still stuck with us to design two more newsletters, including our 50th anniversary double-issue last fall.

*Thank you Cindy & Donna!*

## Remembering Two PLC Founders



Randy Parker

This past winter PLC lost two of its founding generation. Henry Randall Parker of New Boston passed away suddenly in December 2020. Known to all as Randy, he was a founding incorporator of the Piscataquog Watershed Association, which later became the Piscataquog Land Conservancy. Randy and his wife Gail arrived in New Boston in 1963 when they moved into a former grist mill on the Piscataquog River in the center of town. Randy and Gail both volunteered for the PWA/PLC in myriad ways over the decades, including service for many years on the organization's boards of trustees. Their property on the Piscataquog was also the site of PLC's Lobster by the River event for more than a decade. Randy Parker leaves a truly remarkable conservation legacy and will be missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

The PLC family suffered another loss in February 2021 with the passing of Robert Todd of New Boston, another of PLC's original incorporators. Bob was a respected land surveyor and professional forester in our region for 45 years. A lifetime resident of New Boston, he served on several town committees, including the Forestry Committee. The Committee honored Bob for his many years of service by dedicating a town forest in his name. Todd Forest is one of the properties that will soon be permanently protected by a PLC conservation easement. We honor and remember Robert Todd for his lifetime of work promoting land conservation and good forestry in our region.



Bob Todd

# PLC Launches New Trails Webpage

On March 8th, 2020, the Piscataquog Land Conservancy led a late winter snowshoe at Pulpit Rock conservation area in Bedford. It was a great day to be in the woods, and it also turned out to be our last pre-Covid public walk. A week later PLC suspended group events until further notice. A year has passed, and with vaccinations

gathering pace in New Hampshire, we are hopefully headed for much more relaxed public health restrictions. As of now PLC is hoping to carefully re-start regular outings by the start of summer. Between now and then we encourage our members and the wider community to get outside and enjoy PLC's lands and easements. To make "do it

yourself" outings easier, PLC has launched a new section of our website dedicated to properties with established, well-marked recreational trails. The new pages include property descriptions, photos, driving directions and downloadable trail maps. Happy exploring!



## Save the Date - Rose Mountain Rumble Returns Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>

After being cancelled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 6th Annual Rose Mountain Rumble benefit bike ride is provisionally scheduled for Saturday, August 28th, 2021. We are giving ourselves a few more weeks to watch the evolving public health guidance but expect to open registration by early June. For the uninitiated, the RMR is a non-timed "gravel ride" that tours the scenic dirt roads of Lyndeborough and surrounding towns. We welcome riders of every ability and offer a variety of route options from a 20-miler for casual riders to a full 100K course to challenge the most competitive gravel grinder. All routes are marked, and cue sheets are



Rose Mountain Rumble - Gabriella Nissen

provided. The ride begins and ends at Lyndeborough Center Hall, with post-ride lunch provided by the Wilton-Lyndeborough Women's Club. Net proceeds benefit the Piscataquog Land Conservancy. To learn more about the Rumble visit [www.rosemountainrumble.com](http://www.rosemountainrumble.com).

## 2020 Annual Meeting Recap

The Piscataquog Land Conservancy held its 50th Annual Meeting as an online event on October 24th, 2020. PLC members learned about the organization's accomplishments over the past year, which included the protection of three new properties totaling 740 acres, the successful merger with the Bedford Land Trust (BLT), and numerous projects that made our lands more welcoming to the public. Members also elected a slate of new and returning trustees for the coming year (their profiles can be found on the "About Us"

page on the PLC website). The 2020 Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to longtime Bedford Land Trust board members Rita Carroll, Jeanene Procopis and John Monson in recognition of their work on the PLC-BLT merger. The meeting was rounded out with a special video celebrating PLC's fifty years of protecting land and water in southern New Hampshire. The video and a full 2020 "Year in Review" presentation can be viewed by clicking the button below. We can't wait to see everyone in person again in 2021!

## Volunteer Monitors Do It Again

Not even a global pandemic could stop PLC volunteers from completing on-the-ground monitoring of every one of our 126 conservation properties and easements in 2020. Annual property monitoring is a fundamental responsibility of all land trusts, and the Piscataquog Land Conservancy could not do it without the support of an incredible group of volunteers. In 2020 seventy-three volunteer monitors collectively put in more

than 500 hours walking and documenting our lands. These volunteers are the eyes and ears of PLC, and we are truly grateful for the time, effort, and passion they put into watching over these special places. If you love to spend time outside and have an interest in being a part of our volunteer team, please contact Stewardship Coordinator Hailey Nase. She can be reached at [hnase@plcnh.org](mailto:hnase@plcnh.org) or 603-487-3331.



Volunteer Monitor - PLC

# New Boston Town Forest Easement Nears Completion

New Boston Town Forest - Tom Jones



As this issue of the Piscataquog News went to press PLC and the Town of New Boston were just weeks away from completing a conservation easement on the town's five Town Forests, which together total 470 acres. The idea of placing an easement on the land had been discussed on and off for the better part of two decades, and New Boston voters overwhelmingly approved a warrant article authorizing the easement in March 2020. Once completed, the conservation easement held by PLC will ensure the properties are protected in perpetuity. Two of the parcels – the Colby & Siemeze Forests – are located on Middle Branch Road, just across the Piscataquog River from PLC's Thomas and Houghton sanctuaries. The other three – the Lydia Dodge, Sherburne, & Todd Forests – are located along Old Coach Road and include the town's transfer station and ball fields. About seventeen acres encompassing these areas will be excluded from the conservation easement.

## Goffstown and PLC Conserve New Property

By David Nieman



Burns Property in Goffstown - Tom Jones

Strategic conservation planning is hard work. We all want to conserve the beauty and resources in our local domain, but when our efforts can also support larger regional needs, we have a winner! One of New Hampshire's greatest challenges is protecting the Merrimack River, named in 2016 as one of the most endangered rivers in the United States. But what can one town do about that? In Goffstown, most of our land conservation projects buffer stream corridors and our prime wetlands, which benefits both the town and the larger watershed. For decades, the Piscataquog Land Conservancy has been our partner for many of these projects.

This year the town and PLC are working with the family of Ken and Gayle Burnes to conserve their 37-acre property, which will add to a growing and continuous block of conservation land south of Snook Road that is a primary focus area for the Goffstown Open Space Conservation Plan. The area is one of the town's larger blocks of undeveloped forest and is rich in wetlands and buffering uplands. It is also upslope of the wellhead protection area for the Goffstown Village municipal drinking water wells.

The western side of the Burnes property protects a town prime wetland and the southern side is upslope and parallel to a stream flowing into the wetland, though land already protected by PLC's Fullerton-Mahoney conservation easement. The wetland's drainage flows into Gorham Brook, which in turn drains to the Piscataquog River. Wildlife is abundant in this area and property, including many species dependent on the abundant wetlands and those that require larger areas such as moose, black bear, and bobcats.

The Burnes property is ranked as a priority in both the Merrimack watershed conservation plan, and NH Fish and Game's Wildlife Action Plan. The NH Department of Environmental Services recognized its value and awarded a grant for 50% of the expenses from its Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund. The balance of funds will come from the Goffstown Conservation Commission's Land Use Change Tax Conservation Fund.

With the addition of the Burnes conservation easement PLC and the Town will complete a 250-acre wildlife corridor between two of Goffstown's Prime Wetlands. We're not done - there remains a lot of potential in this region. With the support of local landowners, citizens, and the PLC, I hope we can add more chapters to this story.

*David Nieman is a member of Goffstown's Conservation Commission and Open Space Subcommittee*

# To the Place of the Dark River

By Carrie Finke  
(with research help from her  
dad George Fullerton)

## Stewardship Stories



Trail Plaque - Carrie Finke

This past January I was driving along Route 13 heading north from Goffstown into Dunbarton. On a whim I stopped by a historic plaque originally placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1955. I grew up nearby on Snook Road in Goffstown, and the original curvy and narrow version of Route 13 used to pass right by the marker, but now it is hidden away in the trees. My dad always made a point of stopping at roadside historic markers when I was growing up (he still does) but it had been a long while since I had visited this one. The plaque marks a point along an old “indian trail” used by the pre-colonial indigenous people traveling between Amoskeag Falls on the Merrimack River, in what is today Manchester, to Gorham Pond in Dunbarton.

I discovered the marker also included an informational kiosk that I did not recall being there before, so I read the information and took a couple of photos. A trail map in the kiosk showed the old path running north from Amoskeag Falls along Black Brook into Goffstown, then traversing west-northwest and finally turning north to Gorham Pond in Dunbarton. The map’s depiction of the trail shows it running across what are now PLC’s Black Briar Woods and Black Brook Preserves. I am the volunteer monitor for these conservation properties, so I know there is still a footpath along Black Brook. Perhaps it follows the footsteps of the people who hunted, fished, and foraged the land for thousands of years before the European colonization of New Hampshire.

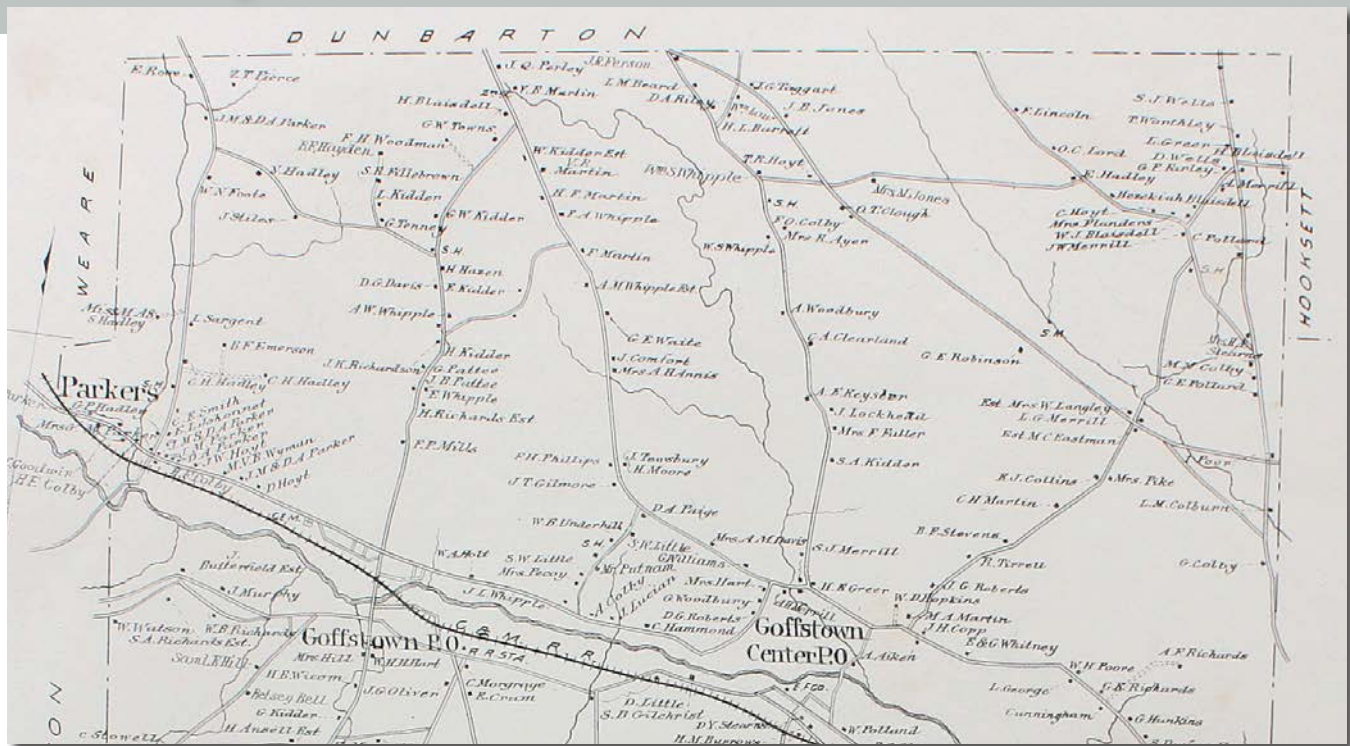
With curiosity piqued by my visit to the old plaque, in the weeks that followed my father and I tracked down some of the books referenced in the informational kiosk. One was George Hadley’s History of Goffstown, which was published in 1922. Hadley wrote: “the Indians had a trail from Amoskeag Falls to Gorham Pond in Dunbarton which was a minor resort for them. They followed the valley of the Black Brook to a point somewhere near the present sawmill owned by G. F. Robertson upon the same, and then bore to the northwest through lots 3 and 4 in their respective ranges, crossing Harry Brook somewhere in the vicinity of the Walker place where George E. Waite now lives and thence by the Indian rock to Gorham Pond. The Indian rock is on the southeasterly side of the road near the bars on land of Charles H. Hazen, and nearly opposite of the road leading to the John Kidder or Frank H. Woodman farm. It is a rock known to the earliest inhabitants, and has an Indian arrow marked upon it.”

Another interesting thing that I discovered in my research was the following translation of the Abenaki word “Piscataquog.” According to Historic Indian Trails of New Hampshire by Chester B. Price (1958), “Pisga-tegu-ok,” means “to the place of the dark river” (“Ok - “To the place”; “Pisga” - “it is dark”; “Tegu” - “River”).

In addition to old books, I found an 1892 D.H. Hurd and Co. Historical Map of Goffstown from the online David Rumsey Historical Map Collection. I was able to locate the sawmill of G.F. Robertson (“S.M. of G.E. Robinson” on the map) on Black Brook abutting what is now PLC Black Briar Woods Preserve and Black Brook Road, the homestead of G.E. Waite on Paige Hill Road, the Kidder property on High Street (Route 13), and the Frank H. Woodman farm road. I mapped the trail route (see orange line on map) through those landmarks.

**Perhaps it follows the footsteps of the people who hunted, fished, and foraged the land for thousands of years before the European colonization of New Hampshire.**

*Story continues on next page.*



Here are my notes for the Goffstown 1892 map to get your bearings: Goffstown Center P.O. is Grasmere center today. Goffstown P.O. is Goffstown Main Street today. Parkers is Parker Station Road where the Goffstown Historical Society is today. Roads depicted on the map that the trail crossed from right (East) to left (West) are East Dunbarton Road, Tirrell Hill Road, Black Brook Road, Tibbetts Hill Road, Paige Hill Road, Stinson Road, High Street (Route 13), and Gorham Pond Road. Water crossings from East to West are Black Brook, Harry Brook, and Gorham Brook.

In addition to Black Briar and Black Brook Preserves, two more PLC easements in Goffstown may be, or be very close to, lands traversed by the indigenous trail. These are the Jennings conservation easement and PLC's Hi-E-Nuff Farm easement. As a PLC stewardship volunteer, it pleases me to know that I am not only helping the organization meet its mission of conserving scenic and wild places, but also protecting places of historic and cultural value in the place of the dark river.

*Carrie Finke of Goffstown is a member of PLC's Stewardship Committee, and a volunteer property monitor.  
Carrie and her father George Fullerton are both PLC conservation easement donors.*



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# Of Metes and Bounds

By David Butler



Senter Falls - Josh Blood

A couple of years ago I was fortunate to become the volunteer monitor for PLC's Alan and Edgar Rice Natural Area. The 15-acre property is located in Lyndeborough on the New Boston line, and features the beautiful cascade known as Senter Falls. Monitoring the land requires walking the boundary at least once a year. The deed for each PLC property has a written description of its boundaries, or in deed-speak, its "metes and bounds." But the best way to understand the boundaries is to study the survey map contained in the property's field file, which provides a to-scale drawing of the boundaries with compass bearings in degrees and distances in feet (you do not need to be an expert with map and compass to be a PLC property monitor).

The survey map for the Rice property was created by a surveyor in 2005 using the metes and bounds description from an 1831 deed, which has remained unchanged in subsequent property deeds ever since. The surveyor included updated information based on his on-the-ground property walk in 2005. The resulting survey map provides some interesting historical notes. For instance, the distances shown on the survey map are not specified in feet. They are specified in rods and links. For example, the southern leg is "60 rods + 15 links". This means that the 1831 deed used information from a survey that was performed with a Gunter's chain. A Gunter's chain is 66 feet long and has a handle at each end. It has 100 links, meaning that each link is 7.92 inches. A rod is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a chain, or 16.5 feet. Edmund Gunter invented the chain in 1620 to provide a standard tool for surveying land.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, lot corners were typically marked with "stake and stones". The surveyor would gather up a pile of nearby stones and place a wooden stake in it. The Rice survey map (again, based on the 1831 deed) has five of these markers - one at each corner, plus "hemlock tree with stones around it" at the brook crossing. Two of these markers have "NF" next to them on the map, indicating "not found". This means that the surveyor in 2005 was able to locate the other three markers placed more than 170 years earlier (the stones that is, not the wooden stake!).

The 1831 deed does not include any information about fencing along the property bounds, but on the 2005 survey map the surveyor included fences found along the boundaries. This information is very helpful when walking the property line. On the southern boundary of the Rice property is a 116-foot stone wall. It is the only one on the property, a reflection of the fact that the property has very little glacial till, rather than an indication of lack of agricultural activity. Rail fences, long since rotted away, were likely in place here in 1831. There are pieces of barbed wire attached to trees here and there along the north and west boundaries. Barbed wire definitely was not there in 1831, as the first U.S. patents for barbed wire were granted in 1873 and 1875. Barbed wire is not an American invention. It was invented in France and was first patented there in 1861.

Volunteering as a PLC property monitor is a rewarding activity and provides an opportunity to learn about the history of our area. Folks who are interested in becoming a property monitor should contact Hailey Nase, PLC Stewardship Director (hnase@PLCNH.ORG). PLC provides training.

*David Butler of Bedford is a member of PLC's Board of Trustees and Stewardship Committee.*



Senter Falls - Josh Blood



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## Upcoming Outings & Events

If the public health data and guidance allows, PLC hopes to resume scheduled public outings by the start of this summer. Watch our e-newsletter and website for updates.

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## EXPLORE OUR TRAILS!

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