



# *Pascommuck post*

*Spring 2008*

## *PCT Celebrates 25 Years*



On November 14th the Pascommuck Conservation Trust celebrated its 25th anniversary at the Nashawannuck Gallery on Cottage Street in Easthampton. The event was attended by approximately 60 members, friends, and former board members of PCT.

During the evening many of the accomplishments by PCT volunteers in conserving land and educating the public were highlighted by President John Bator. For example, PCT has helped to protect more than 650 acres of land in Easthampton, either through purchase, conservation restriction, or working in conjunction with other organizations.

PCT Board member Tom Lautzenheiser gave a virtual tour of the public lands in Easthampton using Google Earth. The tour moved from property to property as if you were flying a few thousand feet up in the air. The presentation was designed to help the audience understand the important role PCTs properties play in providing key buffers and wildlife habitats and also underscored the need to develop connections between open spaces.



# preservation success

During the celebration, Mayor Mike Tautznik recognized John Bator's 10 years as the president of PCT and his 23 years of service on the board (The Mayor is a founding board member of PCT!). In addition to his duties as president, John takes on the task of maintaining PCT's properties, often single handedly. With more than 190 acres of properties, this is not a small undertaking. John also puts in countless hours preparing for PCT's fall and spring plant sale fundraisers. The Board of PCT gave John special gift certificates to the Iron Horse, to encourage him to try to take a night off.

PCT would like to thank Nashawannuck Gallery and Big E's Foodland for helping to make the 25th celebration possible.

## PCT ORIGINAL INCORPORATORS

(March 1, 1982)

William L. Burgart (Current board member)

William Carroll

Thomas Conner (1st Treasurer)

Charles Conner (1st Clerk)

Michael Tautznik

Frank Galat

John J. Moriarty, Esq.

Paul Kuzeja

David Kennedy (1st President)

## PCT PAST PRESIDENTS

David Kennedy

Bob Pinkos

William Carroll

Ed Dwyer

Ken Larsen

Bill Burgart

Debbie Tautznik

Barbara Craig

John Bator (Current)







# *pct conservation areas*

**Stefania Kortés Drondowski**  
Manhan River flood plain forest  
4 acres  
1986



**Edward Dwyer**  
Manhan River flood plain forest  
35 acres  
1985



**Tichy/Dwyer Family**  
Manhan River shoreline  
0.6 acres  
1985



**Old Trolley Line**  
Wetlands, fields, and ponds  
18.3 acres  
2000



**Hannum Brook**  
Stream valley  
17.6 acres  
1996



**John Bator Park**  
Gazebo, fishing steps, benches  
0.5 acres  
1989



**Brickyard Brook**  
Stream valley, woodland, wetland  
11.4 acres  
1996



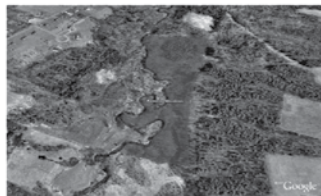
**Old Pascommuck**  
Manhan River flood plain. DAR historic.  
11.4 acres  
1996



**North Branch**  
Stream corridor  
3.4 acres  
1992



**Pomeroy Meadows**  
Stream corridor  
16.3 acres  
1994



**White Brook Conservation/Farm**  
Subdivision open space. Protected farmland  
59.6 acres  
1994



**Broad Brook Meadows**  
Pine woods, floodplain forest  
6.7 acres  
1995



# The Land Protection Committee: Working for You!

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*Dwyer Conservation Area*

Although Easthampton has a land area of only 13.6 square miles—ranking it with the smallest communities in western Massachusetts—protecting and enhancing the city’s ecological integrity is no small task. Despite the challenge, PCT is actively engaged in this mission through efforts including land stewardship, environmental advocacy and activism in City affairs, and educational programs and field trips. Central to PCT’s mission, among these many activities, is the work of the Land Protection Committee. The Committee, formed by Directors Molly Goodwin, Marty Klein, Tom Lautzenheiser, and Doug Wheat, as well as active volunteer Gerrit Stover, conducts some of the most important work undertaken by PCT.

The foundational characteristics of a land trust are its abilities to be proactive in identifying and pursuing conservation targets, to communicate with neighbors about land protection options, and to rally local support for conservation. PCT’s Land Protection Committee works on all these fronts. Upon its formation, one of the first tasks undertaken by the Committee was to identify the resources PCT



should strive to protect. As summarized in a previous *Pascommuck Post* article, these protection priorities are: the Manhan River and its tributaries; large undeveloped blocks and peripheral land; connections between protected lands; and prime farmland. The map of where these priority resources occur in Easthampton has become an invaluable tool for PCT, guiding funds, time, and effort to where they are needed most, against the background of constant development and change natural in any community.

According to U.S. Census data, Easthampton's population grew a modest 3 percent between 1990 and 2000. Yet, based on data from the state's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information, in the similar time period between 1985 and 1999, the amount of residential land increased 15 percent, to approximately 2,400 acres, or 27 percent of the city's land area. The disproportionate ratio between population growth and residential land conversion only means one thing: new developments are generally taking more land to house fewer people. Decreased housing density puts pressure on Easthampton's capacity to maintain a pure water supply, provide parks and open space for recreation, preserve active farmland, and protect viable wildlife habitat—all of which are among the values residents cherish about this place. But not all development is threatening to these resources; forethought about how and where development should take place—as well as where it shouldn't—is critical to ensuring that Easthampton remains a vibrant place to live.

With PCT's land protection priorities identified, the Land Protection Committee is now poised to launch an effort to contact landowners who live in or near the priority resource areas. The fruits of this contact for the landowners will be an increased awareness of the ecological value of their properties, as well as a better understanding of the benefits that could accrue to a property owner from entering the property into a conservation agreement. For PCT, the result will be another step toward achieving the vision of a sustainable Easthampton for people and nature.

*Tom Lautzenheiser*

conservation



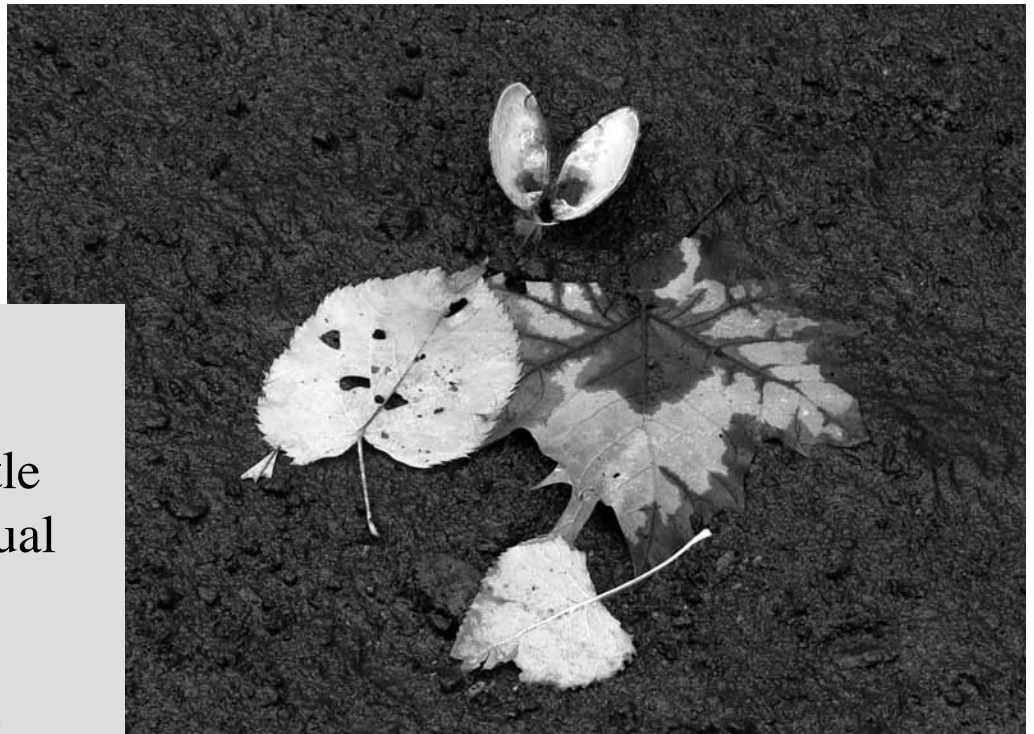
# Upcoming Events

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- **On February 19** at 7:00 pm, the Trust will hold its annual business meeting at the Lathrop Inn, 3rd floor, Mount Tom Room. It will be followed by a talk by Richard Little, retired geology professor from Greenfield Community College, on *The Iceland/Connecticut Valley Connection - Fire, Ice and Continental Creation*. **Everyone Welcome.**
- **On May 3 come to our spring plant sale** for some of the best bargains you will find anywhere, from 8:00 AM to noon. This event is held every year at Big E's parking lot on Union Street. It draws many people who know from past experience that they can find unusual plants at bargain basement prices. Different plants at low prices with proceeds to benefit open space in Easthampton, a win-win for everyone involved!
- **[www.pctland.org](http://www.pctland.org) is the site to check for more events**

education

Richard Little  
Talk at Annual  
Business  
Meeting  
February 19  
at 7:00 pm



*Have you renewed your membership yet?  
Will you ask a friend to join us?*

# Pascommuck Birdbox Sunday

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On October 21, as part of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the Pascommuck Conservation Trust put up a dozen birdhouses for wood ducks, bluebirds, chickadees and swallows at three of its conservation areas in Easthampton. The birdhouses were constructed in a collaboration of the Trust and the Hampshire County House of Corrections' woodworking program.

Fifteen Trust board members and community volunteers enjoyed a beautiful fall day creating nesting sites and exploring the Old Pascommuck, Old Trolley Line and Edward Dwyer Conservation Areas. One of the community members was a student working to meet her requirement for a community service project for John F. Kennedy Middle School in Northampton. She put some muscle into the project by hammering the blue bird boxes onto posts before they were placed in the fields at Old Trolley Line. The sun in the fields was dazzling as it lit up the multitude of bursting milkweed pods and the surrounding fringe of colorful maple trees. The backdrop of Mount Tom made it a perfect setting for the communal feeling of coming together to support wildlife in our glorious town.



Don McQuillan, the father of board member Dawn Ackley, awed us all by climbing the ladder up to the top and then balancing the ponderous wood duck boxes on his head as he secured them to sturdy trees. Peter Brooks, another faithful volunteer for Trust projects, also assisted with much of this work. Because these woodlands are relatively young, there are few dead trees for natural nesting habitat. We were all thrilled at the thought of promoting a wood duck population here in town. Everyone took some time for contemplation as we watched the gentle Manhan River at the base of the Edward Dwyer Conservation Area glimmer with the sun dappled highlights and floating leaves.

While winding around the hill and dale of the Old Pascommuck site, we were able to enjoy the treat of a virtual swarm of lady beetles lazily flying about in the sun near a large tree, contemplating their wintering over location in the bark.



This project helped to further two of the Trust's goals: promoting wildlife in Easthampton and encouraging public enjoyment of its conservation lands. A wonderful time was had by all and we urge you all to visit these sites in the spring to look for any inhabitants in the sturdy new bird boxes.

*Roger Anderson & Molly Goodwin*

# SuperDirector!

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Look – off in the woods... At the keyboard... On the telephone...  
Fighting tall invasives with a single snip! Updating webpages with a powerful  
keystroke! Organizing volunteers with one hand behind her back!

It's *SuperDirector*!

Perhaps this heroic figure is found only on comic book pages or in blockbuster  
movies. But we at Pascommuck are convinced that out there in Gotham -- er,  
Easthampton -- are brave souls who can achieve at least one of these feats.

Every year, the Trust's Board of Directors searches for people who treasure this  
community and its environment to serve with us. But we worry sometimes that the  
awe-inspiring expertise and round-the-clock derring-do of some folks on the Board  
scare off others whose green thumbs aren't as green (like me!), whose knowledge  
of plants and habitats isn't encyclopedic (like me!), or whose sleep patterns can't  
accommodate typing emails at 1 am (like me!).

The truth is that Pascommuck Conservation Trust's work is varied and shouldn't  
be intimidating. We need all kinds to serve on the Board and to volunteer.

- *If you're computer-savvy but not exactly a marathon hiker, we could sure  
use someone to spice up the Trust's website and keep it current.*
- *If the most time you can spare is for a monthly walk around a conservation  
area to report any problems – great!*
- *If you're scared of bears but love people, Pascommuck needs you to help  
with new member outreach.*
- *If you already follow local politics and planning, your steady eye and  
reports on Planning Board and City Council meetings would be invaluable.*
- *Perhaps you're shy about your own accomplishments, but would love to  
talk up the doings of the Trust: We've got a spot for you as public relations  
coordinator and press agent.*
- *Perhaps you don't feel at all abreast of conservation matters – but, hey, if  
you're a good listener and organizer, we would love a new Clerk to compile  
meeting minutes and perhaps work with our member/donor database.*

At least one of those sounds do-able, right? And the best part of it is, that even  
though you don't have to do more than a normal human being, you acquire  
superpowers simply by joining this heroic mission keeping Easthampton green and  
beautiful: Preserving our past, and protecting our future!

So duck into that phone booth, put on your cape, and call Pascommuck's  
Nominating Committee: Roger at 529-1805, Gerrit at 585-8513, or Sue at  
527-0885, or email us at [info@pctland.org](mailto:info@pctland.org).



# The Next 25 Years

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With the Trust's first 25 years behind us, I've been contemplating what we should be doing in our next quarter century. How must land trusts in general evolve to meet the increasing challenge of a rapidly changing world, facing enormous growing pains? Here are some thoughts from various Board members, as well as me:

Foremost, the Trust has to continue advocating for preservation of open space, including prime agricultural land, the Manhan River greenbelt, the slopes of Mt. Tom, wildlife corridors, wetlands and streams, our endangered aquifer, and the reclaiming of Nashawannuck Pond. A formal link connecting the Manhan Rail Trail near Ferry Street to our Edward Dwyer Conservation Area would be super. This will take cooperation with city government and a joining of forces with other organizations, of course.

We must also advocate for a viable City Master Plan that prioritizes important environmental and historical areas, and which sets the tone for updating inadequate zoning laws and wetland regulations.

Hopefully, we can upgrade our handling of property acquisitions and maintenance. Boundaries on new parcels must be clearly and permanently marked and neighbors adequately informed as to what they can and cannot do within our borders. Regarding maintenance work, we are now leaning towards allocating more of this labor to volunteers and especially landscaping companies funded through special grants – hey, we're getting too old for this stuff!

Surely, we'll need new fundraising methods in the future; even our popular annual plant sales may develop into something more encompassing. Grants are vital to us, and we'll need to entice individuals with grant writing capabilities in order to give our present volunteer grant writer, Marty Klein, a much needed break!

We also have to bolster our search for new trust members, board members, and volunteers – no easy task! Ideally, it will be helpful to attract people with specific task skills to match specific needs we may have.

What about Land Trusts of the future? I'd like to see them evolve into community land trusts- an amalgam of representatives from government, environmental, historical, recreational groups, etc. In this manner, good stewardship of our precious resources might prevail, and our Earth would cease to be treated as a mere commodity. Ah, Yes, rebellious measures perhaps, but much needed in these precarious times.

*John Bator*

## Pascommuck Conservation Trust Board

### *Officers*

John Bator, *President*  
Sue Walz, *Vice President*  
Shirley Smith, *Treasurer*  
Dawn Ackley, *Clerk*

### *Board Members*

Roger Anderson  
William Burgart  
Molly Goodwin  
Marty Klein  
Tom Lautzenheiser  
Lydia Omasta  
Doug Wheat

### *Honorary Board Member*

Stella Wiernasz

### *Coordinator of Volunteers*

Lydia Omasta

### *Land Preservation*

Consultant  
Gerrit Stover

### *Newsletter*

*Design & Layout*  
Beverly Wodicka

### *Webmaster*

Doug Wheat  
[www.pctland.org](http://www.pctland.org)  
413-529-9594



## Two Pascommuck Directors Serve on Easthampton's Master Plan Committee

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For the past year, PCT board members Sue Walz and Marty Klein have been volunteering their time and expertise as members of the Open Space sub-committee on Easthampton's Master Plan Committee. The City's updated master plan is a planning document used as a guide for policy makers and municipal officials over the next 10 years, in matters such as economic development, infrastructure, land use, education, housing, etc. As has been the case throughout the past 25 years, PCT, as part of its mission, will continue to advocate for the protection of open space and wise development in our community.

In the 2007 Master Plan Community Survey, a clear picture emerged that a majority of Easthampton's citizens are concerned about Open Space and Land Use. 67% of respondents believe that the pace of development in the City is proceeding too rapidly. 64% directed the City to adopt development strategies that direct new development towards already developed areas, as opposed to utilizing undeveloped lands. In early 2008, a draft version of the updated Master Plan will be presented to the City for comment. Following is a sneak preview of some of the 25+ strategies Sue and Marty have proposed for inclusion in the document:

- Write and adopt a local Wellhead Protection Plan  
The continuing safety of our water supply must be a high priority, particularly in the face of increased development and proposed expansion of the Northampton landfill.
- Compile a list of important uplands in need of protection. Consider adoption of an Upland Development bylaw. Inventory farmlands with ownership information, protection status, vulnerability, etc. Meet with owners to explain protection options/importance to the community.
- Integrate MA Natural Heritage Bio-Map Core Habitat map into existing residential/commercial development regulations. Adjust zoning maps/districts to recognize these critical habitats. Continue to utilize this map and Easthampton's Open Space and Recreation Plan (2005) as guides for future preservation efforts. Update existing maps of priority/preserved lands.
- Continue acquisition efforts along the Manhan River, Bassett Brook, and Hannum Brook, with partners. Acquire public access along Broad Brook, connecting to Nonotuck Park. Increase access to the Manhan River through land acquisition and other means, for non-motorized recreational uses.
- Fill in the gaps of open space connecting Mt. Tom and the Oxbow, utilizing the TDR program, cluster development ordinance and acquisition by PCT, the City and others.
- Explore creation of an incentive program whereby landowners can legally protect open space using conservation restrictions and subsequently qualify for a tax abatement on those lands.
- Rigorously utilize the existing "Conservation Analysis" requirement of residential or mixed-use open space development regulations in the zoning ordinance to ensure that it achieves its intended purposes in the future. Consider incorporating this tool into other existing development regulations.

A Master Plan is not a legally binding document, but should inform decision makers and guide future growth and policies in a community. In the course of drafting our recommendations for open space related issues, we have reviewed relevant documents, incorporated input from the community and considered PCT's role in future preservation efforts here. We urge you to add your comments to the proposed updated Master Plan during the upcoming public comment meetings, so it can truly be a document of and for the people.

*Marty Klein*







**Pascommuck Conservation Trust**

P.O. Box 806

Easthampton, MA 01027

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*Cormorant*  
photographed  
by Marty Klein  
at the Oxbow