

# Views from Mount Grace

MOUNT GRACE LAND CONSERVATION TRUST • CONSERVING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE



SPRING 2018  
VOLUME 29, NO. 1  
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The Richardsons host students from the Village School at their farm every spring for lambing.

## Connecting to the Land

BY DAVID KOTKER

It was the land that inspired Rise and John Richardson to move to the Mount Grace region.

The couple was part of a circle of friends that came to the area from Boston beginning in the 1970s. “We were among the last to come out here,” says Rise (pronounced Ree’sa). “But we kept visiting our friends in Athol and Royalston and saying: ‘this is the place.’ We always knew we would raise our kids in the country.”

The Richardsons and many of their friends joined a group of local parents that formed the Village School, where Rise is now the Director. “We all felt like kids could have more of a direct connection with nature as part of their schooling,” she explains. “Kids discover things outside. You don’t need playgrounds. You need woods, so they can climb trees, splash in puddles, and look at anthills.”

The Richardsons’ farm, on Narrow Lane in Phillipston, has hosted Village School students every spring. It’s also given Rise and John, a software engineer, a place where they can connect themselves to nature, growing their own vegetables, tapping sugar maples, and raising hay for their small flock of sheep.

The couple worked with Mount Grace to protect 133 acres of their land as part of Mount Grace’s Quabbin to Wachusett Forest Legacy Project—which has conserved thousands of acres of land in six towns. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Water Supply Protection holds a

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# Views from Mount Grace

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Dear Friends,

Mount Grace's new movie, *What The Land Is*, is an ode to the outdoors and to the people who, together, make a lasting difference by helping keep the land intact for all of us and for future generations.



This summer, as vacation destinations beckon and Mount Grace enters its new fiscal year, TerraCorps, the AmeriCorps program Mount Grace birthed in 2008, will fledge as a stand-alone 501(c)3 organization. Begun with 4 members serving at our Skyfields office, TerraCorps is now 38 members (5 at Skyfields) serving at 22 organizations across the Commonwealth, all managed out of our Skyfields office. Mount Grace will continue to host several members, but TerraCorps will transition to an independent nonprofit based near Boston.

As TerraCorps members recruit and engage volunteers to meet community needs, the members are acquiring the knowledge and skills to become the next generation of conservation professionals. This is important to land trusts across the country, including Mount Grace. Cultivating a cadre of civic-minded conservationists is just one important aspect of the program. TerraCorps has also evolved into a long-sought for bridge joining traditional land trusts with the growing sector of urban farms and gardens.

Cultivating gardens and cultivating people toward the idea of conservation are two hallmarks of our recently belated Mount Grace matriarch, Barbara Corey, aged 90. The longest serving Mount Grace Board member, Barbara's dedication to civic engagement was carried out with sleeves rolled up and fresh-baked scones on hand.

Listening to Barbara's suggestions and wisdom laid, and re-laid, the groundwork for two dozen years of my own work at Mount Grace. I will continue to aspire to come somewhat close to her example of personal integrity and caring for the land.

With appreciation,

Leigh Youngblood  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust protects significant natural, agricultural and scenic areas and encourages land stewardship in North Central and Western Massachusetts for the benefit of the environment, the economy and future generations.

We welcome your articles, photographs, comments and suggestions. For information about becoming a member or to request a change of address, please contact:

### Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

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### MOUNT GRACE STAFF

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Sarah Wells, *Director of Land Protection*  
Jamie Pottern, *Land Conservation Specialist*  
Jay Rasku, *Community Conservation Director & Land Stewardship Director*  
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[mountgrace.org](http://mountgrace.org)

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# TerraCorps: Growing to Serve New England

BY DAVID KOTKER

Ten years ago, a new partnership with Commonwealth Corps brought four Corps members to serve at Mount Grace. It was a relatively small step for Mount Grace that became a giant leap forward for Massachusetts conservation. Since those early days, we have successfully scaled the program, today rebranded as TerraCorps, to support 36 AmeriCorps members now serving with 20+ partners annually across Massachusetts.

In fact, with land trusts outside Massachusetts asking us to help them too, demand for TerraCorps is growing even faster than our ability to scale the program. We're thrilled with this success, and want to expand our impacts beyond Massachusetts. To accomplish this goal, we announced plans to spin off TerraCorps as an independent nonprofit in the Spring 2017 issue of Views from Mount Grace.

Since then, Mount Grace has hired Impact Manager Ben Carver and Operations & Communications Manager Hanna Mogenson as TerraCorps staff, hosted TerraCorps member Cami Duquet to provide statewide collaborative project support, launched an independent website at terracorps.org, recruited an eight-member Board of Directors, incorporated TerraCorps as a Massachusetts non-profit, applied for federal 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and raised more than \$480,000 of the \$650,000 needed to fund the independent establishment of TerraCorps, Inc.

According to David Graham Wolf, TerraCorps' new President and CEO, "TerraCorps is a unique leadership development program and a capacity-building program for land conservation and urban agriculture non-profits. Its rapid expansion has been fueled by the program's unique ability to flexibly address three critical needs for these groups: volunteer organizing and management, broader and more inclusive community engagement, and greater collaboration."

"Perhaps most importantly," adds Wolf, "TerraCorps has become a bridge that is beginning to connect land trusts with the vibrant urban farming movement, an obvious pairing that is strengthening both, but has been too long coming."

With TerraCorps now positioned to support land trusts and urban agriculture throughout New England, it is a good time to take a moment to look back on Mount Grace's historic breakthrough for land conservation. We look forward to continuing our relationship with TerraCorps as a service site and partner for many years to come.



**Youth Education Coordinators allow TerraCorps partners to support school programs, bringing conservation to the next generation.**

## Connecting to the Land *> continued from page 1*

Watershed Preservation Restriction on the Richardson land, which is split between the watersheds of the Swift and Ware Rivers—part of the water supply for millions of Massachusetts residents.

Most of the Richardson land is either woods or wetlands, serving to filter the Quabbin's water and offering exceptional wildlife habitat. Protecting these woods also creates a bridge connecting two sections of the Phillipston Wildlife Management Area, making the forest habitat more resilient by preventing barriers to the free movement of native species.

Those kinds of connections are another important result of the Quabbin to Wachusett Project, which has added numerous wildlife corridors to knit together existing protected land thanks to a grant from the United States Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program with additional funding support from the Bafflin Foundation, the Fields Pond Foundation, and the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts.

When the Village School classes return to the farm this spring, students will tap maple trees, collect sap, stack firewood and watch lambing. This year, they'll also get a chance to play in and explore the newest protected forest in Massachusetts.

# LEGACY SOCIETY FOUNDERS CIRCLE

## MEMBER PROFILE: Allen Young

BY DAVID KOTKER

The Massachusetts Division of Forests and Parks was “looking forward to working with Mount Grace on future projects,” according to Allen Young’s article on the trust’s first success, the protection of Lawton Forest, in the September 25, 1987 edition of the Athol Daily News.

Allen Young got the scoop. While DFP later became part of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the agency and its successors still work with Mount Grace today. And so does Allen—a graduate of the Columbia University School of Journalism (where the Pulitzers come from), Young may be best known in the region for his volumes of local lore: *North of Quabbin Revisited*, *Make Hay While the Sun Shines*, and *The Man Who Got Lost*, which compile articles, stories, and columns that exemplify the North Quabbin. His column, *Inside/Outside*, appears each week in the Athol Daily News.

Young moved to Royalston in 1973, as a founding member of Butterworth Farm, a back-to-the-land community just north of Tully Mountain, where he lives today. An eloquent champion for both the great outdoors and the community, as Leigh Youngblood describes him in her blurb for *Left, Gay & Green: A Writer’s Life*, his upcoming autobiography, Allen has taken a leading role in causes as varied as gay liberation and the recent stop-the-pipeline campaign.

He became an early advocate for Mount Grace, serving several terms on the Board between 1989 and 2005, and writing for this



Allen Young, on right, with Pete Gerry and Karl Bittenbender at the 25th anniversary commemoration of the Lawton Forest project

newsletter, including our first piece on planned giving—where he suggested bequests as a way for people of modest means to have an enormous impact for the causes they care about.

Matching his deeds to his words, Allen included Mount Grace in his own will, becoming a founding member of Mount Grace’s Legacy Circle, a group of thirty Mount Grace members who hope their bequests will both protect the land and inspire the community. As he said in his own planned giving article: “I am pleased with what I have done. Put Mount Grace in your will, and you will feel good about it.”

*If you would like information about planned gifts and bequests to Mount Grace, please contact Major Gifts and Grants Manager David Kotker at 978-248-2055 x19 or kotker@mountgrace.org.*

## The Finish Line

BY SARAH WELLS

Picture a championship football team, or imagine a bustling kitchen in a popular restaurant. What makes it work? The roles are complementary, not redundant. A team of just linebackers doesn’t go anywhere. A kitchen full of servers will have a hard time plating a meal. There are shared goals—win the game, keep the patrons happy—but everyone knows their job and is uniquely-suited to performing that job. Multi-partner land protection isn’t so different.

By August, the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP) will have shepherded the multi-partner, multi-

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*Mount Grace is a founding member of the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership and has been the Partnership’s fiscal sponsor and coordinator since 1997.*

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landowner “Quabbin to Wachusett” (Q2W) initiative across the finish line. Q2W is many things, including the largest Forest Legacy grant awarded to Massachusetts (\$7M) to-date, and the project with more individual participating landowners than any other Forest Legacy project, ever. But it’s also a testament to the power of teamwork.

None of the public, private, or non-profit partners could have done this alone. We each had a role to fill, and were uniquely-suited for that role. Thirty-two landowners have made the generous choice to conserve their lands. Without them, there is

# What The Land Is

BY DAVID KOTKER

Boyd Estus and Rawn Fulton have a few things in common. Both have a track record of creating award-winning documentary films, and both share an abiding love for Mount Grace.

Estus has shot and directed films for NOVA, Frontline, and other series which have garnered both Emmy and Academy Awards. He lives in Royalston and Cambridge. Fulton, a Bernardston resident, is an award-winning documentarian and the director of “Root Hog or Die,” a film portrait of farming in western New England.

Estus and Fulton have been visiting local farms and conservation areas with Leigh Youngblood to interview farmers and other Mount Grace partners about the land they love. The result: “What The Land Is,” a 13-minute short film that describes Mount Grace’s impact in protecting and stewarding land, featuring examples from the trust’s farm conservation, landscape-scale conservation, community conservation, and land stewardship programs.

John Moore, who conserved Moore’s Maple Grove Farm in Orange as part of Mount Grace’s Tully Initiative in 2001, describes the history of his family’s four generations on the land, and their decision to protect the farm. He is joined by a cast of Mount Grace supporters discussing the trust’s recent conservation partnerships in Winchendon and Montague. The landowner interviews, aerial footage, inspiring stills, and animated map sequence combine to capture the essence of why the land means so much to so many.



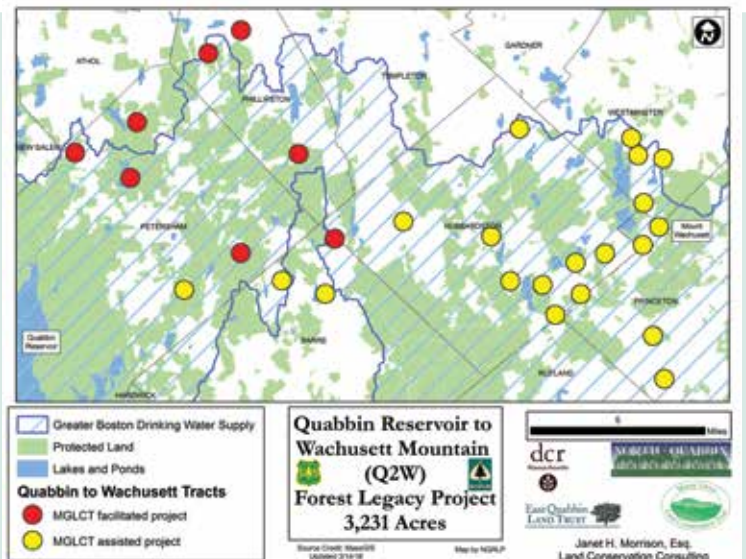
John and Sienna Moore, behind the scenes at Moore’s Maple Grove Farm

“The more I learned about Mount Grace, the more impressed I was about their innovative and collaborative approach to this important work,” said Estus. “Our film was an opportunity to give back to a region that I love.”

“What The Land Is” is online at: [mountgrace.org/themovie](http://mountgrace.org/themovie)

*If you’d like to host a showing of the movie in support of Mount Grace, please contact Major Gifts and Grants Manager David Kotker at 978-248-2055 x19 or [kotker@mountgrace.org](mailto:kotker@mountgrace.org).*

no Q2W. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has served as a vital liaison with the Forest Service, and DCR’s Division of Water Supply Protection, East Quabbin Land Trust, North County Land Trust, Nashua River Watershed Association, the towns of Phillipston and Petersham, consultant Janet Morrison, the Fitchburg Water Department, and Mount Grace have all worked together tirelessly on Q2W. Because of this, our team is poised to permanently protect more than 3,200 acres of working lands. NQRLP assembled the team that dreamt up this project, orchestrated the outreach necessary to make it possible, wrote the application that turned the dream into reality, and has helped keep the team on-track over the past eight years. We can see the finish line.



## Grants for Plants with our TerraCorps Team

BY FLETCHER HARRINGTON

When Mount Grace was recently invited to apply for a grant from the Hollis Declan Leverett Foundation to manage bird habitat I was asked to research, write, and submit a proposal.

As a member of Mount Grace's TerraCorps team, this was a first for me. After looking at our areas of need with the Stewardship Director, Jay Rasku, I wrote a plan to control invasive plants and plant native species utilized by birds at our 139-acre Eagle Reserve Conservation Area in Royalston. The proposal also included a plan to mow the fields at Skyfields Arboretum, which will benefit birds that need forest openings and early successional habitat.

The research required to make a compelling case taught me a great deal about our local birds, their habitat, and how careful management can help them thrive. Finding and applying for grant funding can be a daunting task, but this was a valuable experience for me, and helped introduce me to grant writing.

I'm happy to report that we received a \$15,000 grant and are now preparing for our projects this spring. The work at Eagle Reserve will remove glossy buckthorn which is displacing native vegetation on the wetland edge where birds forage and nest.



Fletcher goes mano a mano with some glossy buckthorn

This is where our volunteers come in: to help with manual removal of invasives (to avoid using herbicides); to plant native species; and to install wildlife exclosures which will protect our new plantings, and these critical habitats, from being damaged by deer. I hope you can join me on the land!

*To volunteer, please email [steward\\_ameriCorps@mountgrace.org](mailto:steward_ameriCorps@mountgrace.org).*

## SPRING - 2018 UPCOMING EVENTS – *Join Us!*

### **Safeguarding Boston's Water through Land Protection**

Metropolitan Waterworks Museum, Newton  
2450 Beacon Street  
Thursday, April 19  
6:30pm-8pm

The Waterworks Museum welcomes Sarah Wells, Director of Land Protection at Mount Grace, for an illustrated talk on our historic Quabbin to Wachusett and Quabbin Heritage land conservation projects, which will protect more than 4,500 acres of land, including forests and open space that safeguard the drinking water used by two million Massachusetts residents. The presentation will incorporate stories of the participating landowners and feature the Boston area debut of "What The Land Is."

### **Volunteer Workdays**

Skyfields Arboretum, Athol  
1461 Old Keene Road  
Friday, April 20, 9am-7pm  
Saturday, April 21, 9am-noon

Celebrate Earth Day with a day of stewardship at Skyfields Arboretum! Mount Grace needs energetic people to help with weeding, pruning, and other yard and trail maintenance. Volunteers welcome for all or part of each day. Please bring work gloves. Snacks provided.

### **Valley Gives Day**

The Pioneer Valley  
Tuesday, May 1st  
ALL DAY

Valley Gives is a 24-hour celebration of generosity. You can support Mount Grace with an online gift all day, or drop in at the People's Pint in Greenfield from 6-11pm to meet with

our staff and Board, have a locally crafted beer or a meal, and enjoy a pub science presentation from Charley Eiseman. Learn more online at [mountgrace.org](http://mountgrace.org).

### **Grand Opening Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames Trail**

Saturday, June 2  
10am-noon

Join Mount Grace, community volunteers, and the Ames family to celebrate the completion and grand opening of the Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames Trail at our Alderbrook Meadows Conservation Area.

Located just south of the center of Northfield with parking on Route 63, our new fully-accessible trail allows people of all ages and abilities to immerse themselves in nature. Take the trail through a stunning grove of white pines to reach the observation deck overlooking a beautiful hidden pond.

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

## Grants Received:

The Bromley Charitable Trust	\$100,000	Unrestricted Program Support
The Hollis Declan Leverett Foundation	\$15,000	Stewardship

## Gifts were Received:

*In Memory of* Barbara Corey, Elizabeth Farnsworth, Mick Huppert, Charles Riley, Susan Woods

*In Honor of* Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames

## Special Thanks *from* Mount Grace to ~

The Athol Public Library, Bill and Christine Copeland, Michael Humphries and Leigh Youngblood, the Orange Innovation Center, Steve Rawson, Paul and Lois Somers, and Paul Wanta, for volunteering to help host, lead, and coordinate Mount Grace events.

Boyd Estus and Rawn Fulton for debuting their film What The Land Is at our Royalston Movie Night!

Patience Bundschuh, Mimi Hellen Jones, Michael Humphries, Beth Ingham & Bob Jennings, Spin Lathem, John & Sienna Moore, Laura Moore, and Jean Shaughnessy for hosting, speaking, and providing food and drink for Movie Night

The Orange Innovation Center Rick Innes of Clearview Composting, Cathy Stanton and Quabbin Harvest, and Rachel Stoler of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, for hosting and helping with the winter gathering of the Greater Quabbin Food Alliance

Andrea Benjamin of O'Brian Farm, Martin Dagoberto of NOFA/Mass, Briana Drohen at LaunchSpace, Deborah Habib of Seeds of Solidarity, Brian Snell from CISA, Cathy Stanton of Quabbin Harvest, Jessica Van Steensburg at Just Roots, and Madison Walker from Greenfield Public Schools for presenting at the Food Alliance gathering

Kent Alexander, Cynthia Espinosa Marrero, Friendly Crossways, Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, Mill City Grows, and Angela Roell for supporting the TerraCorps Martin Luther King Day training and service events

Julia Blythe, Warner Clark and the crew at Lane Construction, Robin Conley, Bill Copeland, Steve Craddock, Kim Farmer at Mim's Market, Joe Graveline, Rachael Lee, Joanne McGee, Lis McLoughlin, the North Quabbin Trails Association, Dick O'Brien, John Passiglia, Steve Rawson, Sue Ross, Susan Space, Joseph Stacey, Jerry Wagener, and Melanie Wise for helping with work at the Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames Accessible Trail

Don Flye, Norm Flye, Kris Gunderman, Raynold Jackson, Johanna Lawlor-Moore, and Steve Rawson for joining us at Skyfields for our Fall Volunteer Day

Bren Carey; Laura Kaye; Lis McLoughlin; Laurie Reid; Gay Roberts; Don Serrento; and Mark, Francia, Luke, and Corin Wisnewski for joining our Volunteer Conservation Monitor Team!

### Greater Quabbin Food Alliance Gathering

Orange Innovation Center  
131 West Main Street, Orange  
Friday, June 8, 8:30am-1pm

Join us at the biannual Greater Quabbin Food Alliance meeting to share your ideas with the community, learn about local projects, and join a network of farmers, businesses, and organizations working to strengthen local food initiatives. Ongoing projects include regional efforts to get more local food served at institutions, jump-start more food businesses in our area, support area farmers markets, coordinate efforts to help farmers, and address food access barriers.

[mountgrace.org](http://mountgrace.org)  
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## You don't have to live in the Valley to support Mount Grace on Valley Gives Day!

Tuesday, May 1 will be Valley Gives Day—an opportunity to join thousands of people in supporting their favorite nonprofits serving Western Massachusetts. You can support Mount Grace online all day, or in person after 6pm at our event at the People's Pint in Greenfield (see page 6).

Starting Thursday, April 26, you can use our Valley Gives page to schedule a gift to Mount Grace in advance by:

- Visiting our page at [mountgrace.org/valleygives/2018](http://mountgrace.org/valleygives/2018)
- Creating your own secure account
- Making a gift to Mount Grace to support local land conservation



Join hundreds of Mount Grace supporters in the Valley and beyond for a day of giving to support the land!