

Views from Mount Grace

MOUNT GRACE LAND CONSERVATION TRUST • CONSERVING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE



FALL 2018
VOLUME 29, NO. 2
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Stitching the Landscape Quilt Back Together**
- **Three Generations, Two Families, One Remarkable Place**
- **Accessible Trail Offers an Abenaki Perspective**
- **What's Cooking at the Co-op**
- **Photos from our Quabbin Partners**
- **Fall Events with Mount Grace**
- **Mount Grace Updates**

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Join us on October 20th at the Annual Meeting to meet the people and animals at Chimney Hill Farm, one of the partners in our Quabbin to Wachusett Initiative.

Stitching the Landscape Quilt Back Together

BY JAY RASKU

Your support of Mount Grace made something special happen for the land we all care about.

Thanks to you, Mount Grace and our partners are celebrating the conservation of more than 4,100 acres through the Quabbin Reservoir to Wachusett Mountain (Q2W) Forest Legacy program and the Quabbin Heritage Landscape Partnership program. These newly protected lands include productive forestland, scenic farms, and critical wildlife habitat. Perhaps most importantly, these two initiatives afforded a rare opportunity to add 36 new patches of land to create a connected 130,000-acre quilt of conservation in one of the most heavily populated states in the country. This vast area of connected conservation land provides clean air and water, safe passage for wildlife, and a move forward on climate change resiliency.

While the number of acres is impressive, perhaps the day-to-day reality is the real reward: enjoying the beauty and quiet of the woods, eating fresh healthy food from the neighborhood farm, watching a Moose and her calf amble along the edge of a pond, hearing

the call of a Bald Eagle gliding overhead, or simply knowing there will always be places to take friends and family to fish, hunt, or hike.

Thank you for contributing and making Mount Grace your land trust, because here, in contrast to many parts of our state, we still have an opportunity to save the land we all love.

Three Generations, Two Families, One Remarkable Place

BY JAY RASKU

The largest privately-held land in the region you've probably never heard of, Chimney Hill Farm rests in a remote corner of Petersham. But its grass-fed beef and heritage pork are sought after by chefs from some of the best restaurants in New England. You can experience this hidden treasure at Mount Grace's Annual Meeting on Saturday October 20th.

> continued on page 3



Dear Friends,

The remarkable natural beauty of the greater North Quabbin region isn't only meaningful to those who live, work, and play here. Consider the fact that nearly half the state's population gets its drinking water thanks to our local forests. This October's annual meeting will celebrate the completion of Mount Grace's landmark Quabbin to Wachusett and Quabbin Heritage projects, which, together, permanently protect more than 4,000 acres of Quabbin watershed land.



To me, it's interesting to think of land conservation projects as bridges across cultural divides, in this case building urban-rural and eastern-western MA connections.

Another landmark event is underway: TerraCorps, the statewide AmeriCorps program Mount Grace initiated and has been incubating for ten years, just relocated from our Skyfields Headquarters in Athol to its own office in downtown Lowell. Now a stand-alone nonprofit, TerraCorps will manage the final year of Mount Grace's AmeriCorps grant while it applies for funding in its own name for future years. Thanks to the hard work of staff here and at service sites across the Commonwealth, the dedication of dozens of members engaged in community service, and the three foundations supporting the spin-off, what started as a good idea is now building a solid foundation of its own. Learn more at TerraCorps.org.

On June 2 in Northfield, we officially opened the half-mile Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames Accessible Nature Trail at Alderbrook Meadows. It serves as a bridge to nature for everyone, especially those who love the land but cannot manage rough terrain. Along the trail, cultural and natural history signs crafted with help from the Northfield Historical Commission and the Abenaki, Gay Head (Aquinnah) Wampanoag, and Narragansett Tribal Nations are a bridge from the past to the present and future. I hope you will visit in person or, virtually, on our website at mountgrace.org.

Thank you,

Leigh Youngblood
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Views from Mount Grace

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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:

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Accessible Trail Offers an Abenaki Perspective

BY DAVID KOTKER

Friends, neighbors, and volunteers gathered in Northfield this summer to see Gunnery Sergeant Jeff Ames formally cut the ribbon to open the wheelchair-accessible trail that bears his name at Mount Grace's Alderbrook Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary.

With Jeff on the podium were his parents, Bill and Nancy Ames, who donated the land to Mount Grace; his wife Kathy, who joined him on the first walk down the new trail; and fellow speakers Elizabeth James-Perry of the Gay Head (Aquinnah) Wampanoag and Rich Holschuh from Vermont's Commission for Native American Affairs, who expressed his "gratitude for the opportunity to invite visitors to reaffirm our relationship with the Sokoki Abenaki homelands, by reconnecting directly with all of our relations here in Sokwakik, the original name for this area."

"The ribbon cutting became a real opportunity to tell the story of the land, which has been part of the Sokoki homeland for thousands of years," says Fletcher Harrington, who coordinated the trail building for Mount Grace as part of his TerraCorps service. "The Ames family's decision to permanently protect the land as a resource to be shared by the community is a new chapter for this amazing place."

Mount Grace worked with representatives of the Gay Head (Aquinnah) Wampanoag, Abenaki, and Narragansett Nations, and with the Nolumbeka Project and the Northfield Historical



Rich Holschuh, Leigh Youngblood, and Jeff Ames at the grand opening

Commission, to design interpretive signs which line the trail as it weaves through five acres of rolling woods to reach an observation deck beside a beaver pond. "This is a beautiful spot that's very easy to get to and explore," Harrington sums up, "I encourage everyone to come out and learn about is for themselves."

The trail will meet all Forest Service standards for accessibility, but some sections are currently moderately challenging. Parking is on the east side of Route 63 south of Homer Road. A map of Alderbrook Meadows and the trail may be downloaded at mountgrace.org/amestrailmap.

One Remarkable Place > *continued from page 1*

Consisting of 760 acres of woods, wetlands, and fields, the land that became Chimney Hill Farm was purchased by John and Dorothy Hall in 1910, soon becoming a welcome refuge from life in Boston. Throughout the twentieth century, the growing Hall clan would camp, hike, explore, hunt, and grow food there, punctuated by family reunions at the farmhouse.

By 2005, ownership rested with seven Hall grandchildren. Spearheaded by Bob Hall, they approached Mount Grace to explore conserving the land before the next generation – about thirty in all – would be confronted with what to do about the property. Mount Grace proposed that Chimney Hill Farm serve as the cornerstone for a percolating initiative to create a network of connected conservation land in the area. With the Hall's blessing, the Quabbin Reservoir to Wachusett Mountain Project began, eventually resulting in the award of the largest federal Forest Legacy grant in state history as well as a Quabbin Heritage grant from the state Landscape Partnership program. In 2016, thanks to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Chimney Hill Farm was permanently protected with a 586-acre conservation restriction, allowing the Halls to keep owning, enjoying, and managing the land in its natural state.

"With seven owners each with their own ideas and objectives, this was destined to be an extremely complex decision," says Bob Hall, "but the compelling case made by Mount Grace helped convince us all that this was the time to conserve Chimney Hill Farm, though it was a bit like herding cats. We are indebted to Mount Grace, to DCR, and to our forester (and family member) Derek Beard,

> continued on page 4

MEMBER PROFILE: Nancy Goodman

BY DAVID KOTKER

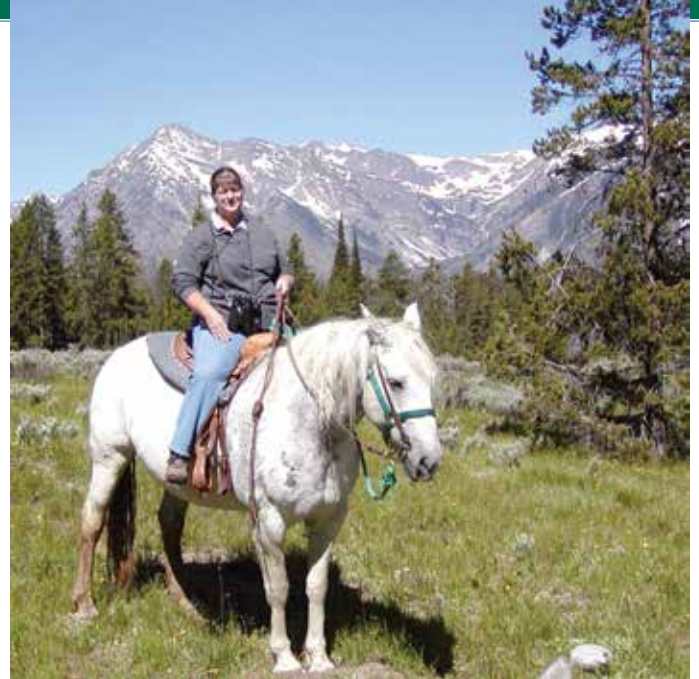
Nancy Goodman knows the woods. A Hadley resident, she “only” hikes the North Quabbin “two or three times a month”— part of her efforts to learn about local plant life, which have taken her to some of the most scenic, and wild, places in Massachusetts.

It’s the culmination of a lifelong interest in plants which blossomed in the 1990s when Nancy began joining renowned fern expert Elizabeth Farnsworth and former Mount Grace Board member Lynn Harper for nature walks.

“Growing up in Wellesley without studying plants, I never had the background to answer the questions I had on walks in the woods,” Nancy says. “but I was always intrigued by what I was seeing, and always tried to identify things and figure them out.”

To honor Farnsworth, who passed away last year, Nancy is joining with other Mount Grace supporters to fund a memorial challenge to raise \$50,000 for land protection as part of the 2018 Annual Appeal. New gifts and pledges of \$2,500 or more in memory of Elizabeth will be matched. The challenge will also match any gift that is an increase of \$2,500 over your last gift.

“Elizabeth introduced me to Mount Grace in 2006” she explains. “She always spoke about the beauty and the amazing diversity of places Mount Grace protected and it was truly a privilege to be able to visit so many of them!” Nancy singles out Masson Ridge in Northfield, which Bill and Christine Copeland protected in



Nancy on the trail in the Grand Tetons

2011 with a “forever wild” conservation restriction, as her favorite. “They’ve got trails up there that go on for miles,” she adds, “with so many different habitats and so many ferns.”

This Spring, Nancy and Lynn Harper hiked Farnsworth’s favorite conservation area, Fern Glenn in Winchendon, together. “That was one way for us to remember her, and I want this memorial to be another. I know what Mount Grace meant to Elizabeth, and I want to honor that by helping to protect more of what she loved.”

If you would like information about joining the Margaret Power-Biggs Society, or about gifts in memory of Elizabeth Farnsworth, please contact Major Gifts and Grants Manager David Kotker at 978-248-2055 x19 or kotker@mountgrace.org.



One Remarkable Place

> continued from page 3

for their knowledge and insights. We are very pleased with the outcome.” Over thirty other families conserved their land in the initiative as well.

Michelle “Shelley” Knapp has deep ties to the land too. She’s the third-generation caretaker of the property, which her grandparents, Allen and Helen Knapp, began managing in 1949, raising three children there while they grew vegetables, raised pigs and cows, made butter, and cared for many horses.

What's Cooking at Quabbin Harvest Co-op?

CATHY STANTON

A lot has been happening at the food co-op in downtown Orange in the past six months—some changes in staff, a fundraising and member challenge campaign designed to help the business move toward profitability, some needed repairs to the building, and a rebalancing of the inventory so that the store carries more of what members and other shoppers are looking for. But perhaps most exciting has been the launch of Nalini's Kitchen, a new project that extends the co-op's mission in some valuable and delicious ways.

Nalini Goordial is an Orange resident and longtime co-op member who served as part of the management team in 2016. She's also an outstanding cook, drawing on her own South Asian family background and combining it with an eclectic sense of flavoring and food combinations shaped by her early years in Guyana and some time spent in the American Southwest. Since May, she's been cooking on Mondays and Thursdays in the little kitchen that Quabbin Harvest built at the back of the store last summer. The popular favorite has been her combo bowls, which often feature Indian food but also Mexican, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean inspired mixes.

Mount Grace purchased the co-op building in Orange to help support local farms with a new market for local food.

After they retired, Shelley's parents, Don and Linda Knapp, took on the work, raising goats and donkeys as well. When Don and Linda stepped down, Shelley stepped up. Her first project was reclaiming pasture with the help of Devon cattle, a docile, yet hardy breed that can handle New England weather. Today, 35 head of cattle graze alongside breeds of heritage hogs, sheep, goats, free-range chicken and ducks, and colony-raised rabbit. The Farm's bounty can be sampled at destination restaurants in Rhode Island and Worcester County, including Deadhorse Hill, Armsby Abbey, and Birchtree Bread Company.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CARSON MCGRATH AND THE ATHOL DAILY NEWS



Stop by Quabbin Harvest (at 12 North Main Street in Orange) for the latest twist on local food from Nalini's Kitchen.

It's something unique in the area, and it has strong potential to attract new shoppers and help grow the co-op's revenue. Even more important, Nalini's approach to cooking reflects the same values—nourishing the local community, respect for the good food produced by our farmers, creativity in making the best use of resources of all kinds—that has shaped the Mount Grace/Quabbin Harvest partnership over the past four years. Quabbin harvest plans to have Nalini's food available all week long, although so far it's still selling out quickly every Monday and Thursday—a word to the wise if you're hoping for a taste!

Why do restaurants love Chimney Hill Farm? Shelley points to the decision to raise animals as naturally as possible. "We have breeds that reclaim pasture land, control weeds, and improve the soil without the use of harmful pesticides. And they have space to roam."

Be sure to experience this remarkable place with the Halls and the Knapps on Saturday, October 20th at the Mount Grace Annual Meeting, featuring a BBQ, beer garden, kids play area, and tours of the land. For more information and to RVSP, go to mountgrace.org or call Carol at 978-248-2055 x15.

STITCHING THE LANDSCAPE QUILT TOGETHER



Many landowners partnered with Chimney Hill Farm and Mount Grace to conserve their land in the Quabbin projects. Clockwise from top left: Madsen, Hakkila, Feldman, Harvard Forest, Stoddard & LeBlanc (now the South Athol Conservation Area), Twohey, Richardson, Blakely, and Hutchinson (center).

FALL 2018 UPCOMING EVENTS – *Join Us!*

North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival Forster's Farm

Chestnut Hill Road, Orange
Saturday and Sunday, September 29-30
10am-5pm

Experience the agricultural, artistic, and cultural bounty of our region in a landscape of protected farms and hills. Stop by the Mount Grace booth for updates on local land protection and to meet the staff, board, and TerraCorps members.



Annual Meeting

Chimney Hill Farm

41 Hall Road, Petersham
Saturday, October 20
10:30am-3pm
\$10 per ticket or \$30 for ticket (with lunch)

Join Mount Grace and our hosts the Hall and Knapp families for a day at this historic 760-acre farm, one of Mount Grace's largest individual projects ever! Celebrate the successful completion of our Quabbin to Wachusett Forest Legacy projects on the land at one of Petersham's hidden gems.

To volunteer with Mount Grace at the Garlic and Arts Festival or at our Annual Meeting please contact Cami Duquet (duquet@mountgrace.org) or 978-248-2055 X13.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Grants Received:

The Tortuga Foundation	\$80,000	TerraCorps Spinoff
Anonymous Foundation	\$62,500	TerraCorps Spinoff
The 1772 Foundation	\$20,000	Sunset View Farm

Gifts were Received:

In Memory of Barbara Cunningham Corey, Elizabeth Farnsworth, Mick Huppert, Phebe Jacobs, Thomas Peterson, and Edith Potter

In Honor of Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames and the TerraCorps Crew

Special Thanks *from* Mount Grace to ~

Alden Booth and the People's Pint, Patience Bundschuh, Bob Busby and Maureen Conte, Andrea Caluori, Charley Eiseman, the Erving Senior Center, Boyd Estus, Ben and Susie Feldman, Fred Heyes, Carol and John Hillman, Bill Lattrell, Ernie LeBlanc, Jeff LeGros, Jim Levitt, Sean Libby, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, MassWildlife, Sally Naser, Eric Peterson and the staff at the Waterworks Museum, Elizabeth Sillin, Jason Silverman at Land for Good, the Swift River School, Rich Valcourt, Robert Wigmore at Farm Credit East, and Allen Young, for volunteering to help host, lead, and coordinate Mount Grace events.

Jeff and Kathy Ames, Bill and Nancy Ames, the Ames Family, Michael Abbate, Julia Blyth, Beth Brault, Lisa Brooks, David Brule, Bethany Clark, Robin Conley, Mike Field, Celt Grant, Joe Graveline, Brian Hall, Pam Hanold, Doug Harris, Howard Hastings, Sue Hellen, Mimi Hellen Jones, Rich Holschuh, Elizabeth James-Perry, Jen Knight, Carol Lebo, Joanne McGee, Lis McLoughlin, Mindy Nadolski, Steve Roberto, Don Sorrento, Susan Space, Jerry Wagener, and Brad Woodward, for helping with the final preparations for, and Grand Opening of, the Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey S. Ames Accessible Trail at our Alderbrook Meadows Conservation Area

John Ward and Claire Chang of the Greenfield Solar Store for empowering our events!

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All the representatives of the Abenaki, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Aquinnah Nations, as well as of the Nolumbeka Project and the Northfield Historical Commission who worked together to create the interpretive signage for Alderbrook Meadows

The Orange Innovation Center and presenters from City Compost, the Cooperative Fund of New England, The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin County Jail's Garden Program, Mass in Motion, Quabbin Harvest, and Walker Farm at Whortleberry Hill, for hosting and supporting the Greater Quabbin Food Alliance Gathering

Carl Kamp—the man with the amp—for emergency audiovisual assistance!

This August, after a comprehensive review of our policies and practices by the national Land Trust Alliance's Accreditation Commission, our status as an accredited land trust was renewed!

The ability of Mount Grace and of land trusts, in every part of the country and around the world, to help local landowners who want to save their beloved land is strengthened by the exchange of ideas and examples to follow the Alliance makes possible. Your belief in Mount Grace is seconded.





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Please join us on **Saturday, October 20th** for our **32nd Annual Meeting!**

This year's meeting will be held at Chimney Hill Farm in Petersham, one of the partners in Mount Grace's landmark Quabbin to Wachusett and Quabbin Heritage projects which, together with our partners, have now protected more than 4,100 acres!

Join us for tours of the farm, local food, and a chance to hear the story of our Quabbin Initiatives from Mount Grace Land Protection and Operations Director Sarah Wells.

RSVP using the invitation inside!



Partnership make anything possible!