

# MONADNOCK CONSERVANCY

## NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

NUMBER 61

## Conserving land for young farmers

### Securing a way of life for the next generation

By Katrina Farmer



Bill Summer

John and Teresa hope to see their children someday farm this same land in Walpole.

John is a third-generation farmer and he's focused on continuing the family tradition. Pete's Stand was founded by John's grandfather, Pete Janiszyn, nearly 50 years ago. He worked the land until the day he died at the age of 81. John and Teresa now manage the business full time. Their kids are growing up in the fields and at the farm stand. "James loves picking corn and pulling radishes," said Teresa.

She and John both wish for a day when they can own land outright. "The ideal would be to have a piece of land with a small house," she said.

"In Walpole," added John, "Because that's where our business and clientele are."

In the meantime, they're thankful for people like Lund, who has said "he's not in it for the money" and just wants to make sure the land can always be farmed.

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Stacy Gambrel

Rows of pepper plants provide fresh grown produce for the farm stand.

John and Teresa Janiszyn set off across the softening field, along with their two young children James (age 4½) and Elise (age 2). It's the first day of farming season, and they're ready again for the long days working outside.

The kids run and splash in the mud, with Elise even getting one boot stuck. The adults talk about adding compost and manure to the soil, a first even though this is the fourth year they've farmed this land.

"This is a field that's finally going to be secure, so I can invest in it," said John.

The 8-acre field along the Cold River, owned by Perley Lund of Gilsum, is a key parcel for the Janiszyns who rely entirely on a network of rented land to grow vegetables for their successful farm stand, Pete's Stand, on Route 12 in Walpole.

Of the eight fields the Janiszyns farm, they have a written lease on only one. Access to the remaining land must be renegotiated each year and is never guaranteed.

Now Perley Lund is working with the Monadnock Conservancy to keep his land forever available for farming and to put together a formal lease agreement so the Janiszyns can have this acreage to count on.

"Their farm operation relies on land that could just disappear," said Stacy Gambrel, Conservancy project manager. This is a tenuous way to farm and puts the Janiszyns at heightened risk of losing not only cropland but their livelihood, she said.

"That feeling that I could lose everything," said John, "That's what keeps me up at night."

## Your gifts make it happen!

Your financial support is critical to protect special places all around the Monadnock region, including Perley Lund's land where John and Teresa farm. If you haven't already, please consider a gift this spring.

Donate now online at [www.MonadnockConservancy.org](http://www.MonadnockConservancy.org) or use the enclosed envelope to make a donation. For more information, call Pat Payne, membership manager, at 603-357-0600.

Katrina Farmer



## Walks in the woods

A land steward's passion is reignited by getting out on the land

By Norman Spicher

Land conservation has come to mean a variety of things to me. In my youth, when I helped my late uncle, James Trask, trim my grandfather's woodlots or when I traveled across the country with the youth group — in total awe of our great land, I was laying the foundation for what would form these beliefs. The early years of my food service career were centered around travel so I could spend time working in unique areas of the country from Colorado to Key West, the Maine coast and the mountains of Vermont, and eventually back to my hometown of Keene.

Land conservation locally means we can leave downtown Keene and in 10 minutes be walking in a forest. It means that there is a fighting chance that the highways coming into this town won't end up filled with strip malls and sprawl. Land conservation means that I can have a difficult time deciding where I want to go snowshoeing or hiking on a beautiful day because there are so many wonderful choices. This process of conservation means that I can stand on a scenic overlook and know, as I look to the horizon, that I won't come back in a few years' time and be looking out over a housing development. Land

conservation has the ability to ensure that there will always be farmland available to supply us and our families with wholesome food. It also means well-managed forests and timber harvests supplying lumber, firewood and employment for those in that industry.

Land conservation has brought me to the Monadnock Conservancy as a volunteer land steward. Shortly before his passing in 2008, my uncle invited me to go with Emily Hague on the annual monitoring of his easement in Chesterfield. Thus the seed was planted and in 2011 I started monitoring other properties as well. Last year, I helped Stewardship Director Emily and Land Manager Rick Brackett mark boundaries on the Daniels Mountain easement in Hinsdale, paddled out to Whittemore Island on Thorndike Pond in Jaffrey to make sure it was fit for a public tour, and did whatever other projects they had in mind for me. Being a land steward for the Conservancy has allowed my passion for the land in our area to resurface. Walks through the forest have taken on a whole new perspective. I get a feel for the land's history, the topography tells us another story, and I'm always aware and on the lookout for varied invasive species. Land conservation means that as long as I can walk and function in the woods there will always be easements for me to monitor — and this, on many days, is my reason to exist. 🌲

Norman Spicher is food service director for Prospect Place. He received the Conservancy's Volunteer of the Year Award in 2013, and was recently hired as part-time seasonal stewardship staff. He lives in Keene.

**What does land conservation mean to you?  
We want to know!**

Post your comments on our Facebook page, or if you'd like the opportunity to be a guest columnist and respond to the question at length, email Katrina Farmer, communications manager: [Katrina@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Katrina@MonadnockConservancy.org).

  
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 CONSERVANCY**  
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[www.MonadnockConservancy.org](http://www.MonadnockConservancy.org)    [Info@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Info@MonadnockConservancy.org)

## Upcoming events

Looking for fun things to do this summer?  
Events are free and open to all.



Emily Hague

### Birds in the bushes

Thursday, May 28, at 6 p.m.

Join Cheshire County Forester Steve Roberge, UNH Cooperative Extension Wildlife Specialist Matt Tarr and Monadnock Conservancy Land Manager Rick Brackett for a walk at the Devan Preserve in Marlborough, touring different habitats to identify wetland and forest trees and shrubs that are important to migratory birds and other wildlife. Please pre-register.



Emily Hague

### Easygoing hike to Converse Meadow

Friday, June 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

An easy, 3-mile hike through the hemlock and hardwood groves of Converse Meadow in Rindge, with views of beautiful open wetlands. Protected by a conservation easement held by the Conservancy, Converse Meadow lies in the path of the proposed Kinder Morgan natural gas pipeline.

### Hike at Widow Gage Town Forest

Saturday, June 6, from 9 to 11 a.m.

Join us on National Trails Day for a 1.6-mile hike at Fitzwilliam's Widow Gage Town Forest, which the Conservancy protected in partnership with the town. We'll pass by an old cellar hole, take in the view of a large wetland and follow a small section of the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail.

### Storybook walk on the Cranberry Meadow Pond Trail

Saturday, June 20

anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Walk along a short section of this downtown-to-mountaintop trail in Peterborough as it winds its way through a field. Pages from the story "Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow," written by Joyce Sinclair and illustrated by local artist Beth Krommes, will be laid out along this easy section of trail for you to read as you go.

### "Treasured Places, Protected Spaces" talk

Wednesday, July 22, at 7 p.m.

As part of the art exhibit with the same name, hosted by the Historical Society of Cheshire County in Keene, Conservancy Executive Director Ryan Owens will talk about how the conservation movement is connecting with other fields of human need and interest.



Mary Iselin

### Plein Air Day at Calhoun Family Forest

Saturday, August 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Artists are welcome to set up for plein air painting, and everyone is welcome to come for a hike and see the works in progress at this conservation property in Gilsum.

### Explore the Chase-Graf Town Forest

Saturday, August 15, from 8 to 10 a.m.

Come for an easy hike along a newly created trail, as part of Surry's Old Home Days. This area is referred to as "Bear Den Ledge" on old maps, and bears have been seen crossing the road near the property. We'll be on the lookout for wildlife signs, including bear.

Get more details, such as where to meet and what to bring, by calling 603-357-0600 or go to our Calendar page in the News & Events section online: [MonadnockConservancy.org](http://MonadnockConservancy.org)



## Salamanders and frog eggs

### Sleuthing in the forest for vernal pools

By Cynthia Nichols

There are a lot of giggles in the woods up ahead.

“Wait. Are you sure you’re going the right way?” says Susan Sielke.

“Oh, you mean you want to get back to the trail?” says Karen Sielke.

Karen pulls out the field map and marks our heading toward an orange dot on the map. The orange dot indicates where we may find a vernal pool, full of salamander and frog egg masses. Off we go, straight ahead, through a thick understory of arrowwood shrubs and highbush and lowbush blueberries.

The Sielke sisters invited me to follow them as they explore the woods off Old Greenfield Road in Peterborough, looking for vernal pools. Vernal pools are short-lived and develop in depressions on the landscape filled with snowmelt and spring rains. They provide rich habitat for many species from insect larvae to fingernail clams. And they are essential habitat for spotted and Jefferson salamanders, wood frogs and fairy shrimp. If we find one of these obligate species it is evidence that the water is a vernal pool.

It’s important to know where the pools are so that they aren’t accidentally destroyed during the dry season. A high percentage

of both wood frogs and salamander adults return to the same pool to lay their eggs year after year.

It’s for this reason that the Monadnock Conservancy is partnering with AVEO, the citizen science program of the Harris Center for Conservation Education led by Brett Amy Thelen, and the Peterborough Conservation Commission to document locations of vernal pools. This is where volunteers like Karen and Susan Sielke come in. By knowing where the pools are, the Conservancy can do more to help landowners care for these important, fragile habitats found on their lands so the salamanders and wood frogs continue to thrive.

The walking is getting a little less bushy and wetter. There are Canada mayflowers everywhere — with tiny light green flower buds ready to pop. Delicate cilantro-like goldthread leaves with a single white flower and starflowers speckle the intricate rich green sphagnum moss all around. The flowers make us worry that it may be a little late in the season to find vernal pools.

On the way to our orange dot, we decide to check a vernal pool that was identified the previous year. We’re looking for fist-size balls of jelly attached to sticks. Within the balls of jelly are lots and lots of little black dots. Often you can see the membrane around each dot. You can tell what kind of amphibian will hatch by the membrane patterns and shape and texture of the egg masses.

“There they are!” says Karen as she points to the center of the pool. Sure enough, we can see pale pearlescent clumps of spotted salamander egg masses attached to sticks underwater. It confirms that this is a vernal

#### DID YOU KNOW?

**Spotted salamanders have an average lifespan of 20 years.**

**A wood frog survives cold winters by letting up to 65 percent of the water in its body turn to ice.**

- compiled by Dee Robbins

pool and that we're going the right direction to find the farther pool, the orange dot on the map. Most importantly, now we know that we're not too late to find spotted salamander eggs.

On we go. Thick sphagnum moss is pulling at our boots and the canopy is clearing a bit. We come to the spot on our map that's marked with the orange dot. Around us is definitely a wet boggy area. But it's not a vernal pool — there are no obligate species.

No matter! We confirmed the other pool and had a fun walk in the woods. "We love getting outside. If we can do that and help science at the same time, that's great!" says Karen. "And I get to go out and spend time with my sister. Being out in the woods is an adventure — this is real life — more people should do it." 🌲

Cynthia Nichols is an independent biologist and teacher living in Peterborough, N.H.



John Pheasant

*"We came around the unearthed root ball of a fallen tree and discovered a deeper pool in the small depression behind it. There in the middle, attached to a submerged stick, was a wood frog egg mass. Aha!"*

- Dee Robbins, vernal pool volunteer



Cynthia Nichols



Cynthia Nichols

## 10 THINGS YOU NEED FOR VERNAL POOL SLEUTHING

- Map
- Compass
- GPS
- Camera
- Pen or pencil
- Notebook
- Field guide
- Dip net or plastic bucket
- Rain jacket
- Rubber boots

For more information about the Vernal Pool Project, please call Brett Amy Thelen at 603-358-2065 or visit [www.aveo.org/citizen-science/vernal-pools](http://www.aveo.org/citizen-science/vernal-pools)

# Welcome new members!

Your gift shows your dedication to this region, its wildlife and scenic beauty. The Conservancy accomplishes so much with your support, ensuring the land you love is treasured forever.

Joseph Alger, Keene  
Elizabeth & Christopher Barry, Keene  
Edwin John & Alice Bernet, Keene  
Kathleen & Steven Bill, Keene  
Donna Bingham, Keene  
Ned Braley, Keene  
Mark & Margretta Bromley, Spofford  
Suzann Buckley, Keene  
Chris & Peter Burchstead, Walpole  
Steven Cady & Deanna Zilske, Keene  
Susan Carlson, Swanzey  
Jack W. & Jill Carson, Keene  
Janet Collett, Keene  
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James & Carol Corliss, Spofford  
Larry & Edwina Cummings, Swanzey  
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Emily Hague



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Nancy & Richard Newton, Keene  
Charles & Susan North, Keene  
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Charles Nurse, West Chesterfield  
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Ted & Ruth Parent, Keene  
Davis Peach, West Chesterfield  
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Anne & Roy Piper, Keene  
Mr. Wendell Polluck, Keene  
John & Mary Lee Pulvermann, Walpole  
Bettina Ramsey, Spofford  
Michael & Marcia Richards, Keene  
Sally Rinehart, Keene  
Aaron & Kimberly Roof, Spofford  
Cynthia P. Rowe, Keene  
Philip V. Sarcione, Chesterfield  
Janet & Joseph Schwantner, Spofford  
Karen A. Schwindt, Roxbury  
Lorraine & Joseph Scrivani, West Chesterfield  
Richard & Susan Segal, Swanzey  
Charles P. & Eleanor K. Shaw, Walpole  
Jonathan Sheehan, West Chesterfield  
Nancy & Robert Smith, Keene  
Robert & Sue Ellen Snape, Greenfield  
Ernest & Jean Snow, Swanzey  
Guy Soucy, Keene

Members and supporters on a hike looking for early woodland wildflowers such as the painted trillium (below).



Emily Hague

Margaret St. John, Keene  
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Do you know someone who would like to become a member or do you want to give a gift membership? Visit the "Support us" section online at [www.MonadnockConservancy.org](http://www.MonadnockConservancy.org).

## Tupelo at the Katie Metzger Town Forest

The Katie Metzger Town Forest in Fitzwilliam is thick with hemlock trees. It also has several streams and wetlands, including swamp stands of blackgum, or tupelo. The tree's foliage and twigs are browsed by deer. Birds and small mammals consume the fruit, and the flowers are a source of nectar for bees. During a recent site visit to the property, there were signs of black bear, bobcat, fisher, river otter and deer. Owned by the Town of Fitzwilliam, conservation commission members recognized that there was development potential for this property given its significant road frontage, more than 1,000 feet on State Highway 119, and wanted to keep it as forested land. That dream was realized when The Town of Fitzwilliam generously donated a conservation easement in March. Conserving the Town Forest ensures that it will stay forever undeveloped and allows the town to generate income from periodic timber harvests and to expand hiking trails.



Emily Hague

This blackgum tree, reaching high to the New Hampshire sky, is on the northern edge of its range. Edge populations are important to ensuring healthy genetic diversity for the species and may aid in adaptation to climate change.

## Young farmers

continued from page 1



Stacy Gambrel

“So much farmland is being developed and paved over,” he said. “If we don’t all work together to do something about it, it’ll all be gone.”

Family Dollar, Jiffy Mart and Tractor Supply are all new stores along Route 12 in Walpole since 2011. The Janiszyns lost a field to one of these projects – and that was in a down economy.

The risk of losing cropland only increases as the economy improves and development picks up again. Now, when land prices are still relatively low and landowner interest is high, is a crucial time for the Conservancy to secure additional farms for conservation — especially with such rich, productive soils as found in Walpole — so that young farmers like the Janiszyns can have a more permanent way of

life and continue providing local food for their community.

“People need to know where their food comes from, and to be able to enjoy fresh, local vegetables,” Lund said.

“Last year we had a little bit of everything on this field — radishes, peppers, summer squash, zucchini, cucumber, tomatoes,” said John.

With Lund’s willingness to protect the land and his excitement for farming to continue to be part of Walpole’s culture, it gives the Janiszyns some hope, too.

“It feels like there’s more future in it,” Teresa said.


“I can’t imagine ever not farming,” John added. 🌱



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