



Together, protecting forever  
the land we love

Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

# Our Town's New Treasure

**Peterborough property offers  
woods, water, and views**

**There's a new gem of a place for  
residents and visitors to recreate**

when in "Our Town." One hundred acres of land between Cunningham Pond and Route 101 in Peterborough has been purchased by the Monadnock Conservancy and is now the Cunningham Pond Conservation Area.

"It's little wonder that Cunningham Pond was a top-ranked conservation priority for Peterborough residents. In addition to the new trails, the unbroken shoreline faces the town beach, and the long, scenic road frontage on 101 creates a welcoming gateway to town from the east," said Ryan Owens, the Conservancy's executive director.

At the heart of the property is a 1-1/2-mile trail network. The main trail starts from a new parking area on Cunningham Pond Road near the intersection with East Mountain Road, from there traversing through woodlands and a hemlock grove before crossing a stream and climbing to a large open field with sweeping views of Pack Monadnock and Temple Mountain. Along the trail, you can find trees with woodpecker holes, mushrooms, and moss-covered rocks amidst the sounds of the stream and birds flitting above.

From the field, a spur trail winds down to an old carriage road at the water's edge. Another spur trail, branching off closer to the main trail's beginning, connects you to the Goyette Natural Area, another Conservancy property, off East Mountain Road.

*Continued next page*



# Thank You

To the Peterson family, for their willingness to work with us and to leave a legacy for the town, we are grateful. Thank you also to the Town of Peterborough, the Merrimack Conservation Partnership, and the more than 260 individuals and families who gave so generously to save Cunningham Pond.

The Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership provided funding for the trails, and the Student Conservation Association arranged volunteer trail crews. Finally, thank you to the members of the Cunningham Pond Preservation Alliance for your vision, determination, and good humor: Judy Blake, Sue & Jim Callihan, Marilyn Kenison, Jeff Kutler, Libby Reinhardt, Mark Schauer, and Liz Thomas.

## Our Town, *continued*

The trails were laid out by Rick Brackett, land manager for the Conservancy, and Lew Shelley of SnowHawk LLC, an independent trail design and construction firm. Most of the labor to build the trails was supplied by teams of young volunteers from the Student Conservation Association. Last fall two teams spent one week each cutting brush, clearing duff, tamping soil, and building two rustic timber bridges to create a safe, scenic walking path.

“I can’t believe what has been back-breakingly accomplished in so short a time ... a beautifully groomed and easily identifiable, but inconspicuous path through this gorgeous forest we have worked so hard to protect,” shared Judy Blake, a Peterborough resident who was part of the group that spearheaded the conservation of this property.

A group of Peterborough residents calling themselves the Cunningham Pond Preservation Alliance first brought this property to the Conservancy’s attention in 2017. Having seen three building lots (20 acres total) on the east shore subdivided and sold, the alliance wanted a partner to help purchase the approximately 100 acres that remained. The Conservancy agreed, and in early 2018, a \$1.5 million campaign was launched to raise the \$1.325 million purchase price plus funds for project expenses, initial improvements, and long-term maintenance. After nearly two years of T-shirt sales, canvassing at the recycling center, and countless donations of all sizes, the deal was completed in December 2019.

Thanks to the vision and care of the community, this new conservation area at the gateway to Peterborough welcomes all and can be enjoyed for years to come.

*Note that, as of press time (early June), the property is still an active work site and not yet open to the public. Please wait to visit the new parking lot and use the trails until you see an opening announcement on our Facebook page, in our e-newsletter, or in the local paper. We look forward to your visit — soon — and then time and time again!*

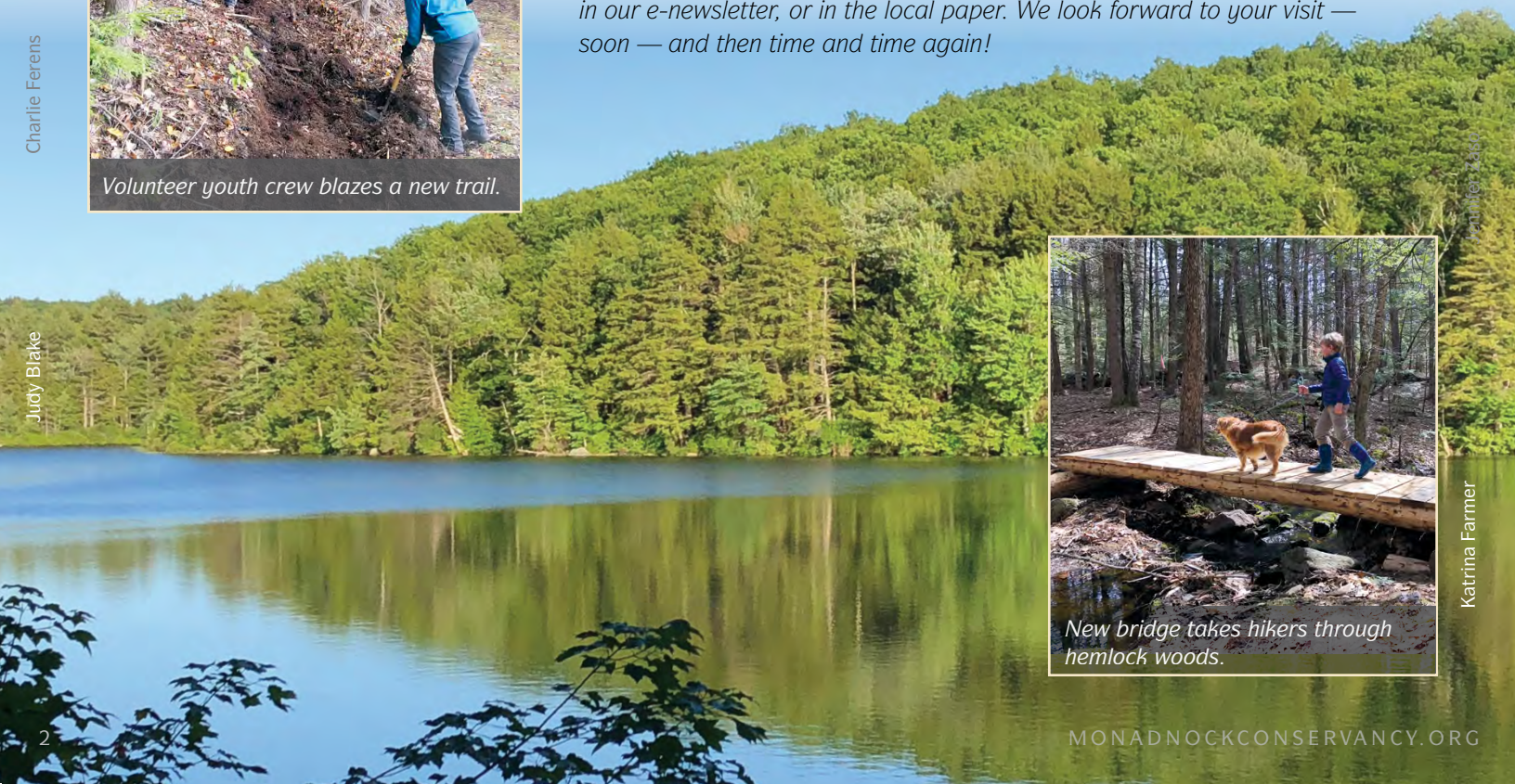


Judy Blake



Volunteer youth crew blazes a new trail.

Charlie Ferens



Judy Blake



New bridge takes hikers through hemlock woods.

Katrina Farmer

# A Legacy of Farmland, Family Heritage

## Conservation includes rich, river valley soil

**Donald “Chip” Wood told his father that he would never sell** their family land to a developer.

He kept that promise when he conserved 28 acres of Wood Farm along the Cold River in Walpole.

“To my family, it’s a very good feeling to know it’s still going to be farmland,” Chip said.

The land was purchased by his grandfather in the early 1900s from the Boston and Maine railroad, and the family grew hay and corn to support their dairy operation.

Chip purchased the land from his grandfather in 1976. He spent some time farming it himself while also working as a helicopter pilot. Currently, the land is leased to Putnam Farm, a large dairy farm in Charlestown.

For Chip, the most important part of conserving his land is that it will be

kept in the family so that, in the future, his sons can inherit the property.

“Conserving ensures that my two sons can take it over and manage it,” he explained. “They’re slowly getting more involved now, and they’re recognizing the value of it.”

The property features prime agricultural soil, which is well suited to corn, grasses, legumes, and vegetable crops, and it is located on top of a large underground drinking water aquifer that could someday be tapped for community use. Anglers and swimmers wishing to respectfully enjoy the adjacent Cold River will continue to have pedestrian access to it.

By conserving the land, Chip reflected, “It’s more or less what it was intended for and what my dad wanted. Our family can carry on the tradition.”



## Thank You

This project was generously supported by the New Hampshire State Conservation Committee’s “Moose Plate” grant program, the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund program, and an anonymous donor.

# A Dream Property

## Scenic, rural character preserved

**Decades ago, when John “Jack” Pratt arrived** from California with his three dogs in the back seat of the car, he knew he’d found the perfect place to retire in Walpole.

Sargent Hill Farm, located on a dead-end dirt road, is a quiet spot with scenic views of Vermont. It’s a place with a lot of country character and charm, and now Jack can relax knowing that future generations can continue to enjoy the beauty and solitude thanks to his decision to voluntarily conserve the land.

The 42 acres are mostly wooded, but recently about three acres were cleared to expand the views and provide pasture for horses. The property also includes stone walls, maple trees, forested slopes, a stream, and two ponds. Protecting a variety of habitats is a key step in

helping at-risk species, such as migratory birds, find favorable breeding and feeding grounds as their ranges shift northward due to climate change.

Sargent Hill Farm adds to an expanding Walpole greenway, anchored by the conserved Hooper Golf Course to the south. Greenways are another fundamental strategy in keeping ecosystems intact and resilient in the face of climate change.

The property is also close to the conserved Watershed Town Forest, the Hubbard conservation easement, the conserved Reservoir Town Forest, and the Conservancy’s Skofield property. It is adjacent to Hooper Forest, a town property. Together, these properties comprise an important corridor for animals and the health of our planet.

“We were so excited about this project because the land is so scenic. It has great views to the west, where you can really see the hills of Vermont.”

— Stacy Cibula, Monadnock Conservancy deputy director



Anne McBride

Stacy Cibula



# More of Beech Hill Protected

## Association expands area for community benefit

**A mountain brook tumbles down the hill**, bordered by lush ferns and stately birch trees. It's a little oasis in these New Hampshire woods. The 52-acre property, on the western slope of Beech Hill in Dublin, is now owned by the Beech Hill-Dublin Lake Watershed Association (BHDLWA) and protected by a conservation easement held by the Monadnock Conservancy. It offers woodlands, water, and recreation as key benefits for wildlife and people alike.

The land is almost entirely forested, with a small wetland along Old Harrisville Road and a half mile of stream. Protecting this land, part of the Dublin Lake watershed, expands upon adjacent conservation land and ensures clean water downstream.

The association was formed in 2006 to keep the water coming in and out

of Dublin Lake clean and clear. Its first 60-acre conservation purchase, the former site of a substance-abuse treatment center, features the Beech Hill ridgeline, which forms a divide between the Connecticut and Merrimack river watersheds. Many know this original property for its early-20th-century carriage road at the top of the hill that anchors a network of trails open to the public.

This new addition expands trails and wildlife habitat as well as forest available for sequestering carbon, a key strategy for fighting climate change. Generations of people have come to recognize Beech Hill from afar, appreciating its natural, scenic, and recreational resources. The BHDLWA's stewardship ensures that it will remain recognizable and appreciated far into the future.

*“Beech Hill is a great place for taking walks ... it's not huge. It includes both private and Beech Hill-Dublin Lake properties. The goal is to keep the land open.”*

– Jack Lewis,  
BHDLWA president



# Welcome, New Staff!

Our team is growing, and we're delighted to introduce you to our newest staff members.

Joining us as stewardship director is **Alex Metzger**. Alex comes to the Monadnock Conservancy from Eastern Research Group Inc., where he worked as an environmental scientist. He has previously worked as a summer forestry technician with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and as a stewardship specialist with the Piscataquog Land Conservancy.



**Pete Throop** returns to the Conservancy as a conservation project manager. Between 2007 and 2013 he was the project director for our Community Conservation Partnership, an initiative that helped local towns build capacity to identify and conserve their most important natural resources. Pete has served as the director of planning and community development for the Town of Peterborough for the past seven years.



**Learn more** about Alex and Pete's backgrounds and interests, as well as those of our entire staff, at **MonadnockConservancy.org**.

# Nature Brings Peace

Amidst the sickness, uncertainty, and loneliness of the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans are flocking to trails and parks like never before. Whether you hike, walk, observe wildlife, or simply take in the view, in times of crisis, connection to nature brings peace.

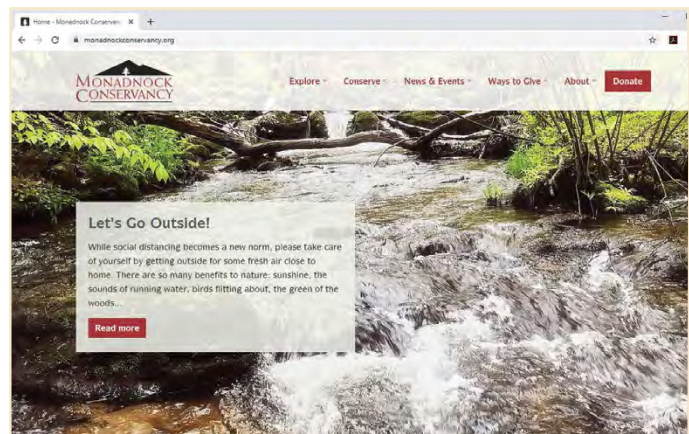
Though our office in Keene may be temporarily closed, the work of protecting and stewarding land continues. Most importantly, our public properties and trails remain open. You can find trail guides on our website as well as recommendations on how best to maintain social distancing during your outing.



# Stay Connected

We have a new website! On it you will find more news articles, stories about people and how they've contributed to local land conservation, and trail guides to properties we own or have protected.

If you aren't already on our e-newsletter mailing list, please subscribe as it's how you'll hear first about good news, find new content on our website for your reading pleasure, get tips, and learn about upcoming events. It's easy to get added to the mailing list. You can sign up online at **MonadnockConservancy.org**, or please email us at **Info@MonadnockConservancy.org** or call the office at **603-357-0600**.



# Care for the Land — Each and Every Day

Your monthly gift is a promise for land conservation

**You can support the land** each and every day by becoming a sustaining member with a minimum monthly gift of \$10. When you make a recurring gift, you will join a growing group of people who are deeply committed to land conservation in this region, prioritizing the protection of open spaces, farmland, and recreation trails.

Will you join this special group? Setting up a recurring, monthly gift is safe, hassle-free, and easy. You can start today at [MonadnockConservancy.org](http://MonadnockConservancy.org) or please contact **Lindsay Tafas**, development director, at **603-357-0600, ext. 113**, or **[Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org)**. Monthly gifts can be set up through a debit from your bank account, credit card, or debit card.



## Thank You to Our Monthly Donors

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*“Our farmlands, forests, and open spaces are our communities’ most important resources. A monthly donation to the Monadnock Conservancy is an easy and convenient way to sustain these assets in our region.”*

— Karen Fitzgerald,  
Francestown



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Founded in 1989, the Monadnock Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation land trust working with you and your neighbors in 39 towns throughout the Monadnock region of southwestern New Hampshire.



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# Save the Date!

## 31st Annual Celebration

Saturday, September 19, 2020

Featuring Rev. Stephen Blackmer of Church of the Woods  
and founding director of Kairos Earth



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