SPRING | SUMMER 2026

Piscataquog News

The Piscataquog Land Conservancy Newsletter

Follansbee Preserve Prepared for Public Opening

By Dan Ewald

In June 2025 PLC purchased a 295-acre property bordering New Boston's Great Meadow wetland from the estate of Alice Follansbee. Now named the Great Meadow-Follansbee Preserve, the parcel includes the entire remaining unprotected shoreline of Great Meadow plus over two miles of frontage on the Middle Branch of the Piscataquog River and Buxton Brook. It is also the keystone in a four hundred-plus acre mosaic of PLC and town-conserved properties on and around the Great Meadow.

Within days of our acquisition of the Follansbee land, PLC stewardship staff began marking over five miles of boundary line, communicating with abutting landowners, and installing signs to inform visitors of the recreational do's and don'ts on the property. We also wasted no time installing gates and other structures to block motorized vehicles which had been a chronic source of damage (erosion, dumping, etc.) to the property's natural resources

Regular readers of this newsletter will recall that PLC purchased the property with funds from the State of New Hampshire's Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund (ARM), which aims to protect and restore the state's wetlands. As part of the ARM grant, PLC committed to work with the well-known wetland scientist Rick Van de Poll to identify restoration opportunities in areas of the property impacted by past logging and sand and gravel extraction. By late 2025 we were ready to hire a local contractor to complete the first phase of the restoration process: constructing two new stream crossings across woods roads to address erosion, sediment pollution, and flooding concerns. A second phase of restoration later this year will include rerouting a stream out of a manmade channel and returning it to its natural course.

As initial stewardship and restoration work has progressed, PLC has also been working with an outstanding group of volunteers to develop a trail system on the property. Over four separate workdays in the fall of 2025 volunteers created a 1.7-mile trail that traverses both old woods roads and brand-new paths. We have also produced a trail guide to explain the property's history and natural resources to visitors, as well as plaques identifying tree and plant species which will be posted soon along the trail.

In another volunteer partnership, Scout Troop 22 in Amherst cleaned up old tires and trash on the property over two workdays. Robert Ramsey, a Scout with Troop 22, is in in the process of building three trail map kiosks for the property for his Eagle Scout project. The kiosks will be installed and finishing touches will be put on the trail system later this spring.

A grand opening event at the Great Meadow-Follansbee Preserve will be held on Saturday, June 20th to officially open the property's trail system to the public. This event is free and open to the public and will include a guided walk and tour of some of the property's exceptional natural resources. To learn more and register, visit the events page of the PLC website: www.plcnh.org/events.

Looking ahead, PLC's long-term management of the Follansbee Preserve will focus on recreation, ecological restoration, forest health and productivity, habitat management, and control of invasive species.

Dan Ewald is PLC's Stewardship Specialist

To conserve the natural and scenic landscapes of the Piscataquog, Souhegan, and Nashua River watersheds of New Hampshire.

From My Corner

Chris Wells
PLC President/Executive Director

Stewardship: The Forever Part

As we turn to springtime thoughts of yard clean up, planting gardens, and hitting the trails, this issue of the Piscataquog News is devoted almost entirely to what we call "stewardship," and the volunteers who make it possible. What do we mean by stewardship? In simplest terms, it means everything we must do, and keep doing forever, after a property is conserved.

First and foremost, PLC must regularly and diligently monitor our land and easements for signs of encroachment or misuse, so we catch small problems before they become big ones. On a closely related front, we must ensure that property boundaries are clearly marked with paint blazes and/or our metal boundary markers, and that these markers are maintained. On lands we own with potential for public recreation, we build, mark and maintain trails, and install informational kiosks and other signage. As of today, PLC manages more than twenty miles of trails, and we hope that this number will only grow in the years ahead.

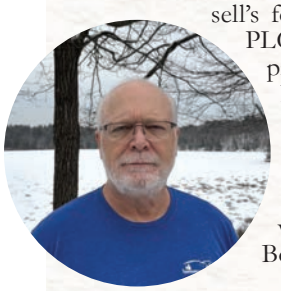
Volunteers have always been at the center of our land and easement stewardship, and even as we have added professional stewardship staff (from close to none a decade ago to two full-time people now), volunteers remain one of PLC's greatest strengths. For instance, annual property monitoring was once again completed in full and on time in 2025, thanks to nearly seventy volunteers who walked and documented current conditions on all of our properties. Dozens more volunteers helped build and maintain trails and complete other land management projects. To everyone who volunteered last year, thank you. We truly couldn't do it without all of you.

As the generations turn and PLC's protected acreage continues to grow, we need to continually add volunteers. Volunteering with the Piscataquog Land Conservancy offers an opportunity to explore new lands or deepen a connection with a familiar property, develop outdoor skills, and build relationships with landowners and other volunteers. If you are interested in learning more about our stewardship work and volunteering, this issue is for you.

PLC Welcomes New Trustees

PLC members gathered on November 1st, 2025 for our 55th Annual Business Meeting to elect trustees and hear reports on our recent achievements and current finances. Two new members were elected to the PLC Board of Trustees. They are:

Scott Chouinard



Scott is a PhD scientist and spent his career in the biotech and medical device industries. He and his wife Claire retired to New Boston several years ago and live in Gordon Russell's former home above Great Meadow. The PLC conservation easement on the Russell property stimulated Scott's interest in the PLC. Scott was our Volunteer of the Year in 2024, has served on PLC's Land Protection Committee since 2024 and monitors two properties for the PLC. He is also a member of New Boston's Conservation Commission (Chair) and Planning Board (Vice Chair).

John Morison IV

John is President & Secretary of Hitchiner Manufacturing in Milford, NH, a multi-national manufacturer of investment castings for the global aerospace and defense, automotive and commercial industries. He is a southern New Hampshire native and grew up spending as much time as possible outdoors. An avid cyclist, John first got to know PLC through the Rose Mountain Rumble gravel ride, which has been sponsored by Hitchiner since 2023. After traveling the world in his twenties John decided NH was still the best place on earth and now lives in Amherst with his wife Stacey and their two children.

Welcome Scott and John!

Land Protection News

Anderson Project in Mason Awarded LCHIP Grant

In December 2025 PLC was awarded a $285,000 grant from the state's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) for our purchase of 141 acres along the Massachusetts border in Mason. The grant award was one of thirty-one announced at a statehouse event that will provide a total of $3.5 million to support land conservation and historic preservation projects across the state.

The Mason property to be purchased by PLC is owned by Judy and Jerry Anderson, who acquired the land over many years with the hope of someday placing it in permanent conservation. Ninety percent of the forested property is identified as a top priority in both

PLC's regional land conservation plan and the statewide Wildlife Action Plan. It also has an existing trail that connects to the adjacent 3,000-acre Townsend State Forest in Massachusetts.

The Andersons are selling their property to PLC for approximately half of its appraised market value. Thanks to their generous bargain sale and with anchor funding from LCHIP in place, PLC is confident we will be able to complete the purchase by our deadline of June 2026. Since its creation in 2000, LCHIP has awarded over $68 million in matching grants to help communities and nonprofit organizations conserve more than 247,000 acres of land and preserve nearly 200 historic landmarks across New Hampshire.

PLC to Receive Gift of Land in Three Towns

PLC recently signed a donation agreement with the owner of three forested parcels totaling one hundred and twenty-three acres in in the northwest corner of New Boston and adjacent areas in Weare and Francestown. Once protected, the property will link existing conservation properties around Dennison Pond to extensive protected areas to the east around the Great Meadow and south along Bunker Hill Road.

The land is currently owned by Linda Lopez, who with her late husband Larry bought the land adjoining their homestead as a place for what Linda likes to call the "critters." She says that over the decades the couple "heard coyotes and lots of owls, and saw deer, porcupine, turkey, bears, rabbits, snow-shoe hare, and once a bobcat from about fifteen feet away that just sat there staring at us. We always wanted to preserve this land for the same reason we bought it. It is a plus that it also adjoins other protected land to extend a wildlife corridor."

The property will be donated to PLC outright, and we will manage the land for watershed protection, wildlife habitat and public recreation. There is an existing network of trails on the property which will allow for immediate recreational opportunities. The parcels fall entirely within the Piscataquog River watershed.

Lopez

Townes

PLC Acquires First Townes Parcel in New Boston

PLC has completed the first phase of our Townes land conservation project in New Boston. On January 30th, we took ownership of a 48-acre parcel from the Townes Family Trust located off the 2nd NH Turnpike and immediately next to PLC's Rice and Proctor Preserves. The forested property features a cranberry bog and 1,750 feet of brook frontage feeding into the Piscataquog River. Nearly all of the parcel is ranked as prime habitat by the NH Fish & Game's Department. The Townes Trust sold the land to PLC at a deeply discounted price, and the New Boston Conservation Commission covered all costs. PLC's acquisition of the land secures another critical piece in a conservation mosaic of more than 4,800 acres across New Boston, Lyndeborough, Francestown, and Mont Vernon.

Meet the Monitors: Philip and Zuzu Cody

By Joni Ramsey

New Hampshire has a tendency to call you home. Philip Cody enjoyed his childhood at his family's property in Weare. He spent his school years in Massachusetts but always came back for the summers and weekends when possible. After marrying and starting a life in Maine, that property in Weare called him back, enticing him to life in a small town, living off the land and enjoying what nature has to offer. Now he and his wife, Zuzu, run Zulip Farms using permaculture and restorative agriculture techniques to improve the health of the soil and increase the biodiversity of their property.

The Codys see themselves as stewards of the land, and their dedication didn't stop with restoring their own farm. As avid hikers, bikers, and outdoorsmen in general, it didn't take long before they recognized a pattern: many of the local properties they frequented had PLC signs. They knew then that they needed to find a way to contribute to the organization that is so committed to preserving nature.

"We probably began volunteering with PLC in 2022," remarked Philip, who monitors two properties in Weare. "We really enjoy hiking and volunteering on the trails. One issue we have run into is that most trail work takes place in the summer months when we are busy on the farm. Monitoring properties give us a chance to do our part at times that are convenient for us," says Philip. Typically, he enjoys bushwacking through the boundaries of their assigned properties in late fall or early winter when farming is slow.

When asked what piece of advice he could give people interested in property monitoring, Philip says, "The only piece of advice I have is to get out there and get involved, period, whatever form that might take. Monitoring is a great outlet since you're just out walking in the woods on your own schedule. If you can help with trail building or clean up, or if you have a great computer skill set or have a background in biology, there are just so many ways people can help."

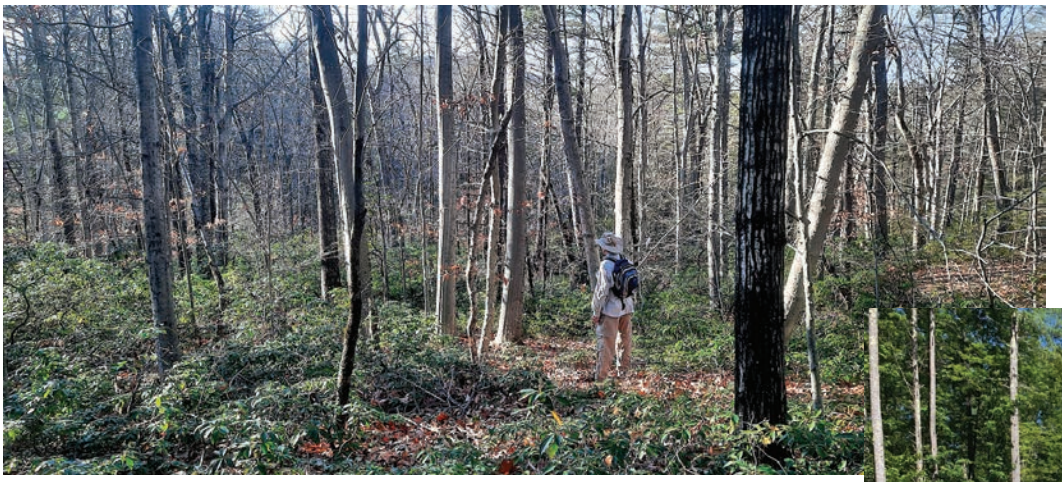
Philip says one way he's always wished he could help is by attending the Annual Rose Mountain Rumble. "We've never been able to go because the event is always on Saturday when we are working at the farmer's market. But we have borrowed their routes and have ridden it on our own time." The Rose Mountain Rumble, set for August 29 this year, is for cyclists of all abilities and runs through the gravel roads of Lyndeborough, Francestown, Temple, and New Boston. Participants can choose one of four routes that fits their abilities, ranging from 25-mile to 80-mile distances. "The moment it's on a Sunday, we're there!" dreams Philip.

The Codys have learned through volunteering the importance of making connections with people in the community. "Philip and Zuzu have sparked a growing partnership between PLC and Weare Conservation Commission," reports Dan Ewald, Stewardship Specialist at PLC. The Codys recognized some flooding issues caused by beaver activity at Ferrin Pond and reached out to PLC, who owns Ferrin Pond Nature Preserve. Since the Weare Conservation Commission owns the abutting Ferrin Pond Town Forrest, Zuzu took a position as a liaison with the commission to help the organizations work together to determine the best course of action for the management of the pond. "Philip and Zuzu have made it possible for us to fully collaborate on the management. It's been a great partnership," says Ewald. This summer on June 27, the two organizations are hosting a joint site visit to clean up the beach and freshen up the trails.

Philip reminisces about his childhood and notes, "It feels like New Hampshire is developing too fast. That's why it's so important for us to work with PLC—to protect open space while we still can."

Throughout the summers, you can usually find Philip and Zuzu at farmer's markets in Contoocook or Canterbury selling their home-grown, better-than-organic raspberries, blueberries, mushrooms, and nuts. When you see them, be sure to say hi and thank them for listening to the call to come home. The PLC is lucky to have people like the Codys in our corner.

Joni Ramsey is a PLC volunteer property monitor from New Boston



PLC'S LAND AND TRAILS NEED YOU: WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

BY DAVE BUTLER AND DAN EWALD

The Piscataquog Land Conservancy's land and easement holdings have grown from 100 properties to 145 in just the past decade. With this growth has come a commensurate increase in our stewardship responsibilities. Volunteers have always been an indispensable part of how we take care of our conservation lands and easements, and today we need your help more than ever! If you like to get outside and do hands-on work, here are four ways to get involved:

MONITOR A PROPERTY

Every one of our conservation properties must be inspected in person by a PLC representative at least once each calendar year. Most of these "monitoring visits" are done by volunteers who walk the property and document any changes year to year. Being a volunteer monitor is a great way to spend time in the natural world, and is an opportunity for amateur naturalists and those interested in the cultural history of our area. PLC properties come in all shapes and sizes, and our stewardship team will find you a property that suits your ability and interests. We have also started a new monitor training program this year that includes indoor instruction as well as practice in the field. The next training session is May 1st at the PLC office in New Boston. In addition to upfront training, each new monitor is accompanied on their first property visit (at least) by an experienced monitor.

MONITOR AND MAINTAIN A TRAIL

PLC maintains approximately twenty miles of trails on our properties, and they also need to be monitored on a regular basis. Our volunteer trail monitors check their adopted trail at least once per season and after significant storms. The most important task is to ensure that the trails are unobstructed by blowdowns, and to report these and other, larger maintenance needs to PLC staff. Regular maintenance like clearing the treadway and cutting back brush is typically handled by trail monitors.

JOIN OUR TRAIL CREW

Another aspect of maintaining trails is assisting with larger projects such as adding and improving "infrastructure" as required. A common example is getting a trail through a wet area, either with a wooden bridge or stonework. The physical work required ranges from minor to more involved if for example, materials and tools need to be moved a long distance from trailhead to work site. We always have a good time, and it's a great feeling to know that trail users appreciate the work we do. We also have an ongoing need for "on demand" trail work like using a chain saw to clear a blowdown across a trail. For PLC trials, only certified chainsaw users can do the work. Certification classes are offered through various organizations and agencies. If you have been certified or would like to learn more about taking the class, please contact us.

Story continues on next page

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VOLUNTEER FOR A "ONE-OFF" PROJECT

PLC regularly gets groups of volunteers together to address a particular project, ranging from trail work to habitat management or invasive plant removal. These workdays are often advertised on our website, newsletters, and sometimes through social media, but the best way to stay informed about upcoming workdays is to join our Stewardship email list.

LEARN MORE!

To learn more about any of our volunteer roles, contact Dan Ewald (dewald@plcnh.org) or Ariyah Proulx (aproulx@plcnh.org) on our stewardship team. You can also contact them by phone at (603) 487-3331 or via the volunteer inquiry form on our website.

Dave Butler is a member of the PLC Board of Trustees and chairs our Stewardship Committee. Dan Ewald is PLC's staff Stewardship Specialist.

Rose Mountain Rumble Rides Again

Registration is open for PLC's 11th Annual Rose Mountain Rumble (RMR), which happens Saturday, August 29th. The Rumble is a non-timed gravel ride that tours the scenic dirt roads of Lyndeborough and surrounding towns. The registration fee includes your choice of four routes, water & snack stops, a delicious post-ride lunch provided by the Wilton-Lyndeborough Women's Club, and a tee shirt custom-designed each year by local bike builder and graphic artist Kris Henry. Net proceeds benefit PLC.

Learn more and register → rosemountainrumble.com

Beware the Black Box

By Rosemary G Conroy

There is growing alarm among wildlife biologists about the impact of a new type of rat poison on our local wildlife population. While all poisons are deadly by definition, the new or "second-generation" rodenticides increasingly being used are really bad news… like DDT-level bad news. For those who need a refresher, DDT was an insecticide used widely in the 1950 and 60s for mosquito control. It devastated bird populations, especially birds of prey. Thanks to people like Rachel Carson who wrote "Silent Spring," it was eventually banned. It took decades for species like ospreys and bald eagles to recover to anywhere near pre-DDT levels.

And yet here we are again! Why is this happening now with rodenticides? As existing rat poisons became increasingly ineffectual (thanks to rodents evolving resistance), manufacturers added anti-coagulants to their products, now known as "second generation anti-coagulants" or SGACs. The rat, mouse, or other wild rodent eating the new type of bait eventually dies of internal bleeding — but it can take several painful weeks. As they get sicker, they get easier to catch by predators. And since these SGACs don't break down, any animal that eats the rodent also gets poisoned. If they are pregnant, or nursing kits or feeding owlets, those offspring also get poisoned. Nothing touched by these poisons seems to get out alive. (And yes, that includes house cats.)

This isn't just devastating for our local foxes, hawks, owls, bobcats, fishers, and coyotes — it has a tragic human element as well: it's happening without most people even knowing it. A proliferation of black bait boxes has been popping up everywhere in our state and beyond. Many pest-control companies have begun "subscription" programs where they will refill your bait box on a monthly basis. Most subscribers don't even know what's in those boxes — they are probably just happy that their "rodent problem" is gone.

Photo Credit: Mike Thomas

Photo Credit: Pat Nelson

But would they be as glad if they knew that our natural predators are also going to be gone? It's not just hyperbole: The number of injured hawks and owls being brought into local wildlife rehabilitation centers that have these exact rodenticides in their systems is increasing exponentially. Many of them die because the only antidote requires weeks of repeated dosing and they are typically too sick to survive that long. Studies on fishers by UNH in 2019 showed that 34 out of 35 animals tested positive for these types of rodenticides.

Unfortunately, a New Hampshire House committee recently voted to reject a bill that would have banned SGACs in our state, despite support from New Hampshire Fish and Game, NH Audubon and other wildlife-focused organizations. NH Fish and Game testified at the hearing that these SGACs were having "well-documented and wide-spread negative impacts" on local wildlife. Other experts reiterated that we are losing our fishers and "we may be a decade too late to save them."

While a ban cannot be reintroduced to the legislature until 2028, lots can be done to raise awareness and educate people in the meantime about the lethal impact these rodenticides are having. There are ways to prevent mice, rats and other rodents from wreaking havoc in your home or garden without endangering their natural predators. For more information and specific non-toxic solutions, visit rodenticidefreeNH.org.

Rosemary Conroy is a naturalist, writer, and artist and long-time supporter of PLC. She is also a big fan of Rachel Carson and wildlife in general.

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SPRING/SUMMER EVENTS

Wed. April 22 – Earth Day Tree ID Walk and Nature Scavenger Hunt. Tarr Sanctuary, Goffstown

Sat. April 25 – Vernal Pools Walk, Follansbee Preserve, New Boston

Sun. May 10 – Mother's Day Birding, Saunders Pasture, New Boston

Sat. May 30 – Nature Journaling w Betsy Holmes, Bedford Library

Sat. June 20 – Trail Opening, Follansbee Preserve, New Boston

Sat. Aug. 29 – 11th Annual Rose Mountain Rumble, Lyndeborough

Sun. Sep. 20 – Fall Harvest Dinner, Weare

To register for PLC outings, please visit our website: plcnh.org/events/

Piscataquog News

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Spotlight on Stewardship

To Conserve the natural and scenic landscapes of the Piscataquog, Souhegan, and Nashua River watersheds of New Hampshire.