



**Dunstable Rural Land Trust
1070 Main Street
Dunstable, MA 01827**

Dunstable Rural Land Trust

D.R.L.T. News

Issue No. 14

April 2010

George E. Tully, Sr. Retires from Board

"I like land." This is obvious to anyone who knows George Tully and talks with him. Although he retired last year from his position as Treasurer of the DRLT, he is still the "go to" person for information about land in Dunstable. From his many years of logging both on his land and on that of others, he has acquired and retained an amazing amount of valuable data. George usually can find a boundary quickly and often knows the exact acreage of a parcel. Although retired from the Board of Directors, George continues to be someone whom we can consult about land, and he is an active supporter of the Trust. A visit with George at the Tully Farm and a look at the hayfields, cornfields, and woodlots shows the visitor that George loves the land and keeps it well.

Bob Kennedy, DRLT Board President

New Directors David E. Tully & Anne L. Davis
David E. Tully has been a behind-the-scene presence for the DRLT for many years, whether mowing the grass at the Wildlife Preserve, keeping track of the details at meetings, doing our accounting or organizing Winterfest. David has been a very active and involved member. David E. Tully was elected Treasurer on April 25, 2009 to succeed his father, George E. Tully, Sr. Welcome to the Board!

Anne Davis comes to the board with an interesting and varied background. She moved to Dunstable in 2005 after living in Edinburgh, Scotland for eight years. Prior to Scotland she and her husband Chuck lived in Madras, India. There she worked as curator of Dakshinachitra, a museum village and landscape project of the Indian National Trust. Anne holds a BA from Smith College in Art History and a Masters of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. While at Penn her interest in landscape conservation grew with course work in American Landscape History and Documentation of the Historic Landscape. She completed studies for the National Park Service at Valley Forge and for the Biddle family at Andalusia in Delaware. Anne is no stranger to the area having spent time here with her grandmother, Margaret Larter (a founding member of the DRLT), aunts, uncles and cousins. Welcome, Anne!

Anne writes *"The rich historic landscapes of Dunstable are unique, unspoiled and will continue to fascinate me. The efforts of the DRLT are remarkable. So much of Dunstable's open space and forests are accessible for us all to enjoy as well as the generations to come. We are so fortunate to live here."*



The Dunstable Rural Land Trust is pleased to announce the successful Town acquisition of the 10.75 acres belonging to the Carter Family on Hardy Street. (continued on page 4)

**Town Wide
Earth Day Celebration
“Clean Sweep Campaign”
April 17th -24th**



Earth Day Packets – Trash bags, gloves and Earth Day Stickers will be available at the Town Hall and the Library from April 14th and at the Transfer Station on Saturday, April 17th only. Filled bags may be left along the road for the Highway Dept. to pick-up. You may also deliver them to the Transfer Station. **Please note that the bags must display the Earth Day Sticker in order to be picked up or accepted at the Transfer Station.**

Volunteers are needed to clean up on Rt. 119 from the Tyngsboro line to Dunstable Center (adults only). If you would like to organize a specific area in town to clean-up, contact:
Danice 978-649-4514, ext. 224 or Sue 978-649-6750.

2010 Calendar sales topped \$3,000!

Many thanks to Janice Toth for her lovely paintings featured in this year’s calendar. Jeff & Justin Pallis of DS Graphics in Lowell printed the calendar. Thank you, Jeff, Justin & Janice!!



DRLT Board of Directors

- Robert E. Kennedy, President
- David E. Tully, Treasurer
- Alan E. Chaney, Secretary
- Elaine Basbanes
- Frank G. Cover
- Anne L. Davis
- Lisa R. Dingle
- Peter J. Georges
- Judith K. Larter
- David Webber



Winterfest Button

The sale of the 5th Annual Winterfest Button was designed by Graphic Artist Beth Ricardelli, formerly of Dunstable, daughter of Bonnie & Bob Ricardelli. Many thanks!

Don't forget to get yours next year! They are quickly becoming a Dunstable Collector's item.



Cool temperatures made for smooth ice at this year’s Winterfest. The skating was superlative. On ice there were lively hockey games, family skating parties and successful ice fishing adventures. Everyone enjoyed the sleigh rides with a small bit of snow for a Wintery background. Thank you, Sue Tully for your enchanting story telling. We also appreciate the efforts of the Boy Scouts for providing our bonfire and serving refreshments. Thanks to Mabel Tully and Elaine Basbanes for the delicious hot soup. Christine Kennedy commemorated the day with a unique and stunning watercolor which will be raffled off at this year’s DRLT Annual Meeting.

Please visit our website www.drlt.org

Keep an eye out for improvements to the Fletcher Street entrance of the DRLT Wildlife Preserve.

Zachery Shea of Dunstable Boy Scout Troop Number 28 will be leading an Eagle Scout project to enlarge and enhance the parking lot area. The troop will move the present gate back, clear brush, level and pack the area with gravel. This should make parking far more accessible at this entrance.



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*Newsletter Produced by Grace Jeanes
Edited by Elaine Basbanes & Judy Larter*

Invaluable Vernal Pools

by Laura Johnson



If you are fortunate enough to live in an area where you can hear spring peepers, then you probably know what I mean when I say that my heart is filled with joy each spring when their unique trill sounds for the first time after a long winter.

Where I live that time usually comes toward the end of March and is sometimes followed by a cold snap that silences the peepers. And even though I know they have experienced such temperature fluctuations for millennia, I am always worried that they will "make a bad decision" (in the vernacular of those of us with teenagers) and stay out too late. After all, it is the male peepers that cause all the racket in hopes of attracting females. So I always wonder if the biology of breeding will trump the biology of survival.

I suppose the good news is that spring peepers can survive being (mostly) frozen—a trick that should get more attention from kids who seem to be wowed by many kinds of special effects in the non-natural world.

An important thing about spring peepers is they need the right habitat to carry out their life cycle. Adult peepers survive roughly three years, during which they must have a place to call home, ensuring that their young can survive year-to-year and, in the long-term, their much-anticipated evening chorus will forever sound out in spring.

What peepers—and many other creatures you will read about in this issue of Sanctuary—need are vernal pools, which are shallow ponds subject to large seasonal water fluctuations. During the winter and spring, they fill with snow, rain, and high groundwater; but, during most of the summer and fall, they typically—but not always—are dry. The key thing is that vernal pools are devoid of fish because of their impermanent nature. That means that the tadpoles, eggs, and larvae of all the species in the early stages of their life cycle are not in danger of being eaten by fish.



Mark Your Calendars

Monday Morning Walks

May 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th

Each week we'll explore a different DRLT or Town of Dunstable Conservation Area. There will be opportunities to walk a pre-existing trail or to blaze a new one. We'll leave town hall *promptly* at 9 a.m.

Winterfest 2011

Sunday, January 30, 2011 11 a.m.–3 p.m.



Vernal pools are found in woodlands, meadows, and floodplains all across Massachusetts. Some animals live in vernal pools year-round while some rely on vernal pools just for breeding. Frog tadpoles and salamander larvae develop in the pools before migrating to adjacent uplands to live out most of their adult lives.

These temporary pools are extremely vulnerable to development and are often overlooked when wetlands are identified on construction sites because in many months they're dry and resemble the surrounding land. Even if a vernal pool itself is saved from destruction, changes in the adjacent upland may disrupt the habitat and life cycles of the resident species. Removal of the surrounding forest during building of houses, driveways, and lawns, for example, may degrade a nearby vernal pool to such an extent that the amphibian population is eliminated.

The first warm rainy night in the spring (at least 45 degrees) triggers a mass movement of salamanders from the forested uplands to the vernal pools, where they will lay thousands of eggs before reversing their migration. There are many Mass Audubon programs in the spring that both explain and observe this phenomenon. I hope that you will consider joining us to marvel at these amazing creatures and that you will also take steps to help protect these harbingers of spring.

Laura Johnson, President

Mass Audubon *Sanctuary* magazine, Spring 2010

(Continued from page 1)

The Conservation Commission oversaw this important accession with financial support from the Town Community Preservation Act funds, as well as generous donations from the DRLT and an enthusiastic neighborhood effort. The land will be a unique town asset from many standpoints. There are open fields, hemlock forests, deep marsh wetlands, rock outcrops, streams and a large vernal pool which is pending certification from *Mass Fish & Wildlife*. This breadth of landscape supports a diverse collection of plant and animal life, including several State Listed birds, reptile and amphibian species. It also provides crucial public access into several other parcels of open space including the abutting Gage Town Forest (37 acres) and lands owned by the DRLT (13 acres). This purchase ensures a total of 60 contiguous acres will be protected forever from development, and open for all to enjoy.



Wolves eat about 15-20 pounds of meat at a time.

Sponsored by DRLT

On April 25, 2009, Stephen Small, Esq., provided an informative talk, "Preserving Family Lands: Conservation Easements – Some Things You should Know". Stephen Small advises individuals and family owners; providing advice on complex planning issues to ensure maximum tax benefits in connection with conservation and preservation easements. He emphasized that "right now the tax incentives for donating a conservation easement have never been greater." If you missed this informative lecture, the DRLT still has copies of Stephen Small's Preserving Family Lands: Book 1 Special Updated Edition. Call Anne L. Davis (978) 649-7243 for a copy.

One of the highpoints of the year was the *Septemberfest* at the DRLT Wildlife Preserve. We were incredibly fortunate to have a pristine fall day. The highlight of the event was a fascinating presentation on Wolves. Michael and Amy LeBlanc from Gardner Massachusetts treated the group to a lively and eye opening discussion on the nature of wolves. Michael amused the large audience with stories from over thirty years of experience living and working with wolves. He brought along a four year old male wolf, Denahee, who captivated the crowd. Other non-stop events of the day included an early morning fishing derby, guided walks, as well as EMS (Eastern Mountain Sports) kayak demonstrations and excursions on the upper pond. It was a memorable and unbeatable fall day for all who attended.

For those who missed the Wolf Talk, here are some fascinating facts from Michael LeBlanc about wolves:

- Wolves are afraid of humans. In fact there has never been a documented case of a healthy wild wolf attacking a human in North America.
- Wolves do not make good pets.
- Wolves are pack animals with a very sophisticated social structure.

If you would like more information about wolves and the LeBlanc's programs visit www.wolftalk.net.



Thank you to EMS for a fun day with kayaks!