



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

## **Dunstable Rural Land Trust**

D.R.L.T. News

Issue No. 20

April 2016

### **DUNSTABLE RURAL LAND TRUST Report of the Trustees April 2016**

This past spring was a very sad time for the Dunstable Rural Land Trust; co-founder and long term supporter and benefactor, George E. Tully passed away in May. The Trustees have elected to permanently set aside the Memorial Donations made in his name to the Permanent Endowment Fund established in 2014.

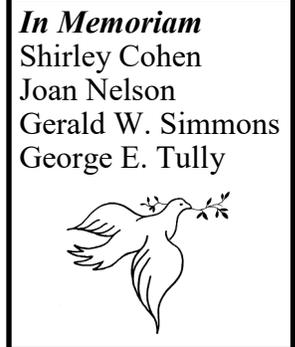
David Webber, neighbor, volunteer, trustee and secretary of the Dunstable Rural Land Trust moved to Hollis NH. As required by the Trust Agreement, David resigned as trustee, but continues his efforts as a volunteer and trustee of the Dunstable Civic Trust.

Friends of the DRLT have continued to be very supportive with cash contributions during our annual campaign. Each year these contributions continue to exceed those received during the preceding year. This is a testament to the role the Trust provides in the community and our motivation to continue our efforts.

The past 16 months have been both busy and productive. The Trust normally has one or two property acquisitions in process each year. However, this past year the Trust has simultaneously been involved with seven properties. The Trust has taken ownership of three properties, and we have two properties that are currently in the process of being finalized very soon. We are working with the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife with a cash contribution to assist their efforts in a property purchase which is currently pending and lastly, we are in the process of finalizing the terms of the bequest from the late Olive F. McLoon.

The three property donations were finalized this year included the following:

- The Basbanes family donated approximately six acres located at Thorndike and French Streets. This donation was made with the intent to preserve a picturesque parcel that was originally owned by the LeBlanc family who resided on Thorndike Street.
- Attorney Philip Nyman of Lowell donated land located on High Street (approximately one acre) that he held for many years. Mr. Nyman has always had an affinity for the Trust since 1974 when he represented the Trust in its first land purchase
- The Trustees held a Special Membership meeting at the Dunstable Town Hall in January. The purpose of our meeting was to allow the Trust to accept title to property in a community not adjacent to Dunstable. The DRLT had been approached by Mrs. Constance Richardson of Dracut to protect an 18 acre hayfield that had meant so much to her late husband, George Richardson, at the intersection of Mammoth and Nashua Roads. (The permanent conservation restriction on this parcel is held by the Dracut Land Trust.)
- With regards to the McLoon property at Main and Thorndike Streets in Dunstable; Mrs. Olive F. McLoon, who passed away in 2011, bequeathed her property consisting of two houses, a barn and approximately 120 acres to the Trust. This bequest was subject to a life estate to her son Ronald McLoon who sadly passed away in December 2015. The Trust and representatives of Mr. McLoon's estate will be working together to carry out the wishes of Olive McLoon.



(Continued on Page 2)

The two properties in the final stages of preservation include:

- Property located in Tyngsboro in close proximity to other property in which the Trust has an interest, and
- Parcel located on Main Street.

Both of these parcel donations are being made by families and individuals wishing to preserve the properties in perpetuity; they feel that the Trust is the most appropriate vehicle to accomplish this.

The Dunstable Rural Land Trust website ([www.drlt.org](http://www.drlt.org)) has recently undergone a major upgrade by Whitney Beauregard of New Ipswich, NH. Since launching the new site in mid-summer, many individuals have made contributions to the DRLT directly from the website. We are appreciative of Whitney's time in keeping the website up to date.

The Trust annually hosts three events which are open to the public and provide the community an opportunity to view some of the Trust property and/or learn of our recent activities, including Septemberfest, Winterfest, and our Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is held the fourth Wednesday of every April at the Nashua Country Club. Unfortunately, Winterfest was cancelled this year because of the mild weather resulting in inadequate snow and ice.

The Trust continues to operate as a 100% volunteer organization. Our operating expenses are limited to property maintenance and insurance. Approximately 90% of all income is expended to assist land-owners to permanently restrict future development of their property while they continue to retain ownership or to make outright donations to the Trust. Payments made to facilitate such donations or permanent restrictions include appraisal, engineering and legal fees.

The Trustees would like to express our thanks for your continued support and look forward to continuing our mission to acquire, preserve and protect the rural character of Dunstable.

*David E. Tully*  
*Trustee and Treasurer*  
*The Dunstable Rural Land Trust*



**DRLT Board of Directors**

Robert E. Kennedy, President

David E. Tully, Treasurer

Robert Ricardelli, Secretary

Elaine Basbanes

Alan E. Chaney

Frank G. Cover

Anne L. Davis

Judith K. Larter

Brian Reynolds

John C. Thompson

Peter J. Georges, Honorary Trustee

George E. Tully, Sr\*, Honorary Trustee

\*Deceased

## Septemberfest—2015

### *Reptiles & Amphibians of Massachusetts*

On a beautiful fall day for Septemberfest we had a fascinating presentation of the Reptiles & Amphibians of Massachusetts by Richard Wolniewicz from Mass Audubon's Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary. We met many beautiful snakes and turtles and learned about their lives.

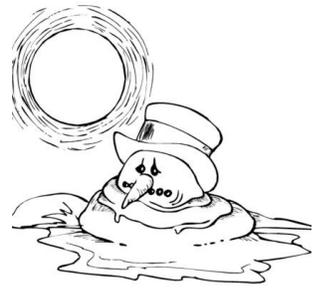


Kayaks and paddleboards provided by EMS of Nashua were enjoyed by many on the upper pond.



## Winterfest—2016 CANCELLED

Our 20th Winterfest was cancelled this year due to lack of ice and snow—we'll try again next year! We've cancelled only 5 times in 20 years.



Please join us next year at the Dunstable Rural Land Trust property at 1074 Main Street on Sunday, January 29th, 2017!



## Mark your Calendars!

### Monday Morning Walks

May 2nd, 9th & 16th

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.



### Septemberfest

Saturday, September 17th  
Stay tuned for more info.



### Winterfest 2017

Sunday, January 29th  
11 a.m.–3 p.m.



## THANK YOU to David Webber

A special thank you to long time Trustee and Board Secretary of the Land Trust, David Webber. David & Coral were active DRLT members for many years. They lived very close to the DRLT Wildlife Preserve and took a special interest in the property— maintaining trails, volunteering at events and keeping a watchful eye. Coral passed away in December 2013 and David has moved from Dunstable.

## Dunstable Rural Land Trust

1070 Main Street Dunstable, MA 01827  
[www.drilt.org](http://www.drilt.org)

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

# Thank you to our Members!

## 2016 Calendars sold out quickly!

The sale of the 2016 calendars raised over \$2,500 for the DRLT. Thanks to avid photographers, Denise Hurt and Debbie Sherwood for their beautiful photos of the DRLT Wildlife Preserve.

Thank you to Jeff & Justin Pallis of DS Graphics in Lowell who printed the calendar. Thanks also to the General Store, the Library, SeasonS at Calmore, Rose of Sharon, Dunstable Conservation Commission and the DRLT Directors who helped with sales.

## Home Party Fundraisers a Success!



We would like to thank Bob & May Hopke, Jeff & Jean Haight and Chuck & Anne Davis for hosting parties at their homes during the past year to benefit the DRLT.

*These fundraisers helped raise funds for the Tobey & Talis properties.*

Visit us at  
[www.drlt.org](http://www.drlt.org)

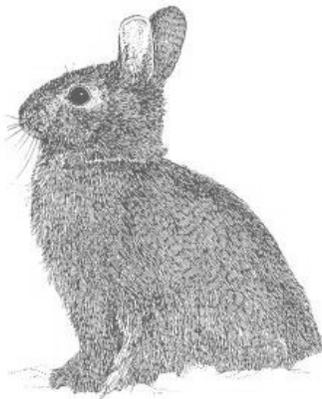


## “Every Litter Bit Hurts”

**Thank you to all who help to keep the DRLT properties clean by picking up trash.**

The Dunstable Rural Land Trust Wildlife Reserve at Main Street has seen an increase in utilization during this past year for several reasons, not the least of which is the attractiveness of the property and the comfort people have walking this area. The Trustees would like to thank those individuals who help maintain this property.

## New England Cottontail



*Sylvilagus transitionalis*

### Disappearing rabbit trick

Why would a rabbit, the epitome of prolific breeding, be considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act? The New England cottontail is in just this predicament. Its population numbers are declining. As recently as 1960, New England cottontails were found east of the Hudson River in New York, across all of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, north to southern Vermont and New Hampshire, and into southern Maine. Today, this rabbit's range has shrunk by more than 75 percent. Its numbers are so greatly diminished that it can no longer be found in Vermont and has been reduced to only five smaller populations throughout its historic range.

The Mass Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has been visiting some of the DRLT properties to determine if the habitat is suitable to release some New England cottontail rabbits.

Keep your eyes out for the bunnies!

### Where the bunnies are

The New England cottontail prefers early successional forests, often called thickets, with thick and tangled vegetation. These young forests are generally less than 25 years old. Once large trees grow in a stand, the shrub layer tends to thin, creating habitat that the New England cottontail no longer finds suitable. Active at dawn and at dusk or night, the New England cottontail feeds on grasses and plant leaves in spring and summer and eats bark and twigs in winter. Home ranges vary from one-half to 8 acres, with adult males having larger home ranges than females. Research has shown that New England cottontails on patches of habitat larger than 12 acres are healthier than those on patches less than 7 acres. Presumably, rabbits on small patches of habitat deplete their food supply sooner and have to eat lower quality food, or may need to search for food in areas where there is more risk of being killed by a predator.

## (New England Cottontail Continued)

### Why are their numbers declining?

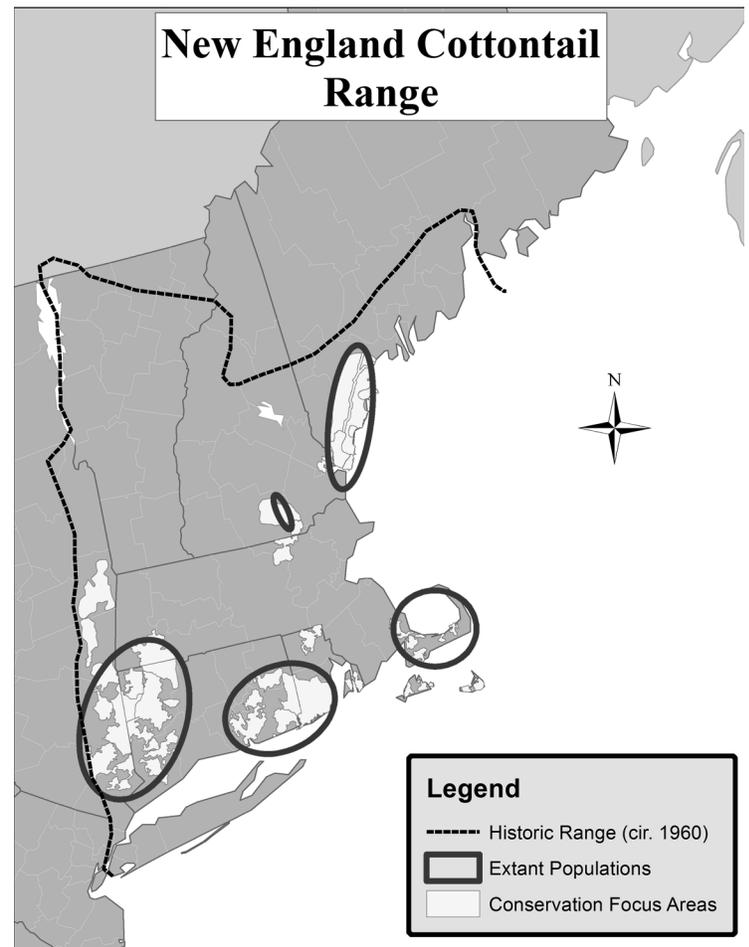
Biologists believe the reduced extent of thicket habitat is the primary reason for the decline in numbers and range of New England cottontails. Prior to European settlement, New England cottontails were probably found along river valleys where floods and beavers created the disturbances needed to generate its preferred habitat. Forest insect outbreaks, large storms like hurricanes and ice storms, and wild fire also created disturbances in the forest that promoted thicket growth. During colonial times, much of the New England forest was cleared for agriculture and then subsequently abandoned during the early 1900s. This abandoned farmland allowed for a great deal of early successional habitats to develop. Today, these habitats are aging while others have been developed and are no longer suitable for the New England cottontail. The introduction of exotic invasive species, such as multiflora rose, honeysuckle bush and autumn olive, in the last century has changed the type of habitat available to New England cottontails. These plants form the major component of many patches where cottontails can be found. It may be that stands dominated by non-native species do not provide rabbits with the food resources that native plant species do. Today white-tailed deer are found in extremely high densities throughout the range of New England cottontails. Deer not only eat many of the same plants but also affect the structure and density of many understory plants that provide thicket habitat for New England cottontails.

### Introduced competitor

In the early 1900s until the 1960s, hunting clubs and some eastern states introduced another species of rabbit, the eastern cottontail, into New England. Eastern cottontails appear able to thrive in a greater variety of habitats than New England cottontails through its ability to detect predators sooner. This helps eastern cottontails forage more safely in relatively open cover, while New England cottontails risk predation whenever they leave the security of their dense thicket habitats. The slightly better ability to avoid predators enables eastern cottontails to live in more diverse habitats, such as fields, farms and forest edges, and they are gradually replacing New England cottontails in many habitat patches.

### Identity is more than skin deep

It is nearly impossible to distinguish a New England cottontail from an eastern cottontail by looking at them. The minor differences of ear length, body



mass, and presence or absence of a black spot between the ears and a black spot on the front of each ear are subtle enough to be missed and are not 100 percent accurate. Scientists used to rely on examining the rabbits' skulls for positive identification, but can now use DNA analysis of fecal pellets. Since rabbits drop fecal material all around their territory, the extracted DNA from pellets collected throughout the region can provide a picture of where the New England cottontail is found.

### Helping the cottontail

The New England cottontail is the subject of research and habitat management in New York and the New England states. Halting the decline of scrub and brushland habitat is paramount, as is identifying potential habitat free of competing eastern cottontail to which New England cottontails could be restored. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shares the concern for the future of New England's only native cottontail. Working together, states and federal agencies may help improve the chances of survival for the New England cottontail.

(Adapted from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service )  
<http://www.fws.gov>

## A Barn is a Miracle



Here is a miracle painted red,  
A weather vane upon its head  
With sliding panels in the walls,  
The hidden doors and secret stalls.

The wheat upon this threshing floor  
Once stood in acres, score on score;  
And all of June stacked in this pile  
Was hay and clover by the mile.

With summer high up in the mows  
Above the sheep, above the cows,  
The small teeth nibbling in the bin...  
So winter's barn takes all things in.

Here, in this small and magic box,  
The farmer crowds his fields and flocks;  
Arithmetic can never tell  
How one barn holds the farm so well.

*Ralph W. Seager (1911-2008)*



## Annual Meeting Guest Speaker Kevin Gardner: Discovering New England Stone Walls

Kevin's informal talk covers a few of the main topics of his book about New England stone walls, *The Granite Kiss* (Countryman Press), touching on history, technique, stylistic development, and aesthetics. He explains how and why New England came to acquire its thousands of miles of stone walls, the ways in which they and other dry stone structures were built, how their styles emerged and changed over time, and their significance to the famous

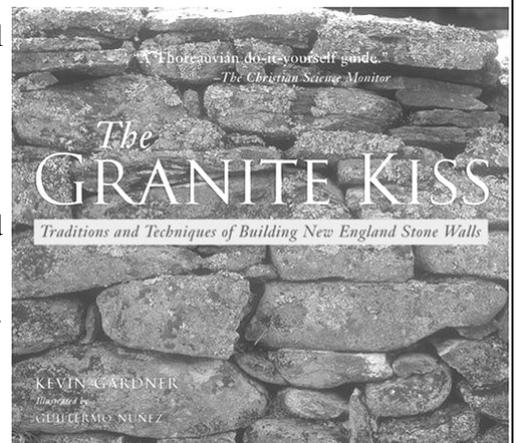


New England landscape. Other topics may include: differences in approach between historical and contemporary wall-builders, a discussion of restoration tips and techniques, and information about design, acquisition of materials, preservation, and analysis. There is always a generous question-and-answer period, during which listeners are encouraged to bring up specific problems or projects on their own properties.

Along the way, Kevin occupies himself building a miniature wall or walls on a tabletop, using tiny stones from a five-gallon bucket. He often brings along his collection of books about stonework, and copies of *The Granite Kiss* will be available for sale.

Since the publication of *The Granite Kiss*, Kevin has presented his program at dozens of historical societies, bookstores, and town libraries all over New England, including Canterbury Shaker Village, the NH Historical Society, Castle-in-the-Clouds, Old Sturbridge Village, Boston's Arnold Arboretum, and many, many more.

Kevin Gardner is a lifelong resident of Hopkinton, NH. Like a lot of independent rural Yankees, he's been a jack of many trades, a builder, logger, writer, teacher, radio voice, even an actor and director.



*Dedicated to the preservation  
of the rural character of Dunstable*

**The Annual Meeting is open to ALL Members & Friends!**

**On April 27th  
at the Nashua Country Club**  
25 Fairway Street, Nashua, NH

6:00 – 7:00 PM – Cocktail Hour – Cash Bar  
Crudités of Cheese & Crackers with Mixed  
Veggies & Fruit  
7:00 P.M. Dinner

Guest Speaker Kevin Gardner,  
*Discovering New England Stone Walls*  
\$45.00 per person

**Dinner Menu**

**SOUP**

Vermont Potato Cheddar Bisque

**SALAD**

Mandarin salad of mixed greens, red onion & pecans

**ENTRÉE**

Roasted Sirloin with Bordelaise sauce  
Dauphinoise Potatoes and Baby Vegetables

or

Crab Stuffed Shrimp, topped with a Dill Hollandaise  
Dauphinoise Potatoes and Baby Vegetables

Warm rolls and Sticky Buns

**DESSERT**

Molten Lava Cake with Raspberry Coulis & Chantilly Cream  
Coffee & Tea

You do not have to be a member to attend the dinner.



**Dinner Reservations** (Please write # in box): \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed for \_\_\_\_\_ dinners at \$45 each.

Please return your reservation no later than April 20<sup>th</sup> to:

Roast  
Sirloin

Crab Stuffed  
Shrimp

**David E. Tully, DRLT**  
1070 Main Street  
Dunstable, MA 01827

**2016 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

**Membership  
makes a  
difference!**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Individual/Family Membership \$25

I would like to make an additional contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support land preservation in Dunstable.

**Total Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

The Dunstable Rural Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) public charity. Gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Thank you for your support.

Remember, you will not save the Dunstable woods and wetlands, broad vistas and country roads for your children and grandchildren by doing NOTHING. Instead, please join us and become a member today!

**Please return FORM with check made payable to: DRLT**

Please Send to: David E. Tully, DRLT  
1070 Main Street  
Dunstable, MA 01827

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**



**PLEASE JOIN US!**



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