

## Groton Conservation Trust

Like us on Facebook 



New signs popped up this spring. Wattles Pond received a facelift; a new sign was placed at Nashua Rd. to help visitors find Still Meadow and a new trail head; and this one directs visitors to the Mason Back 100 from Old Dunstable. Thanks to Trustee Wendy Good for her maintenance.

Your donation to the GCT helps us manage over 1400 acres of conservation lands, protecting valuable habitat and creating recreational opportunities for all. Please consider joining us with a \$50 family donation.

**DONATE NOW**  
Secure donations through  
Network for Good

**Dear Susan,**

### **GCT Awarded Invasive Project Grant**

We are excited to announce that the Trust is a recipient of a \$14,000 General Endowment Grant from The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. With this grant, and the continuing efforts of volunteers, the GCT will move forward with an invasive species management project for two critical properties, Shepley Hills and The Bates Land, with the additional goal of sharing the evaluation of these efforts with other property stewards in the region.

According to Trustee Mark Gerath, The Community Foundation grant supports programs and projects pertaining to community development and the environment and since consideration is given to projects that are "strategic, innovative and sustainable" the GCT project was a good fit.

"The grant committee was impressed with scope and

### **Quick Links**

[How you can help](#)

[Our Properties](#)

[Contact Information](#)

[Trustees and Founders](#)

[Groton Trails Website](#)

**GCT Mission  
Statement  
(adopted 2014)**

**The Groton Conservation  
Trust enhances the quality  
of life in our community  
through environmental**

comprehensiveness of the project and the fact that it will be sharing the results of the study with other land trusts," said Phil Grzewinski, president of the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts.

Invasive plant species now pose an immediate and significant threat to the ecological integrity of our properties. To learn more about what the Shepley Hills and Bates Land Project entails and to see maps showing the abundance of invasive plants, continue reading [HERE](#).

## Matisse Bells are Restored on the Blackman Field Property

- by Trustee Ed McNeirney

Visitors to the Forest Bells on the GCT's Blackman Field and Woods property know that three of the bells have been missing since last fall. They were removed for repairs, and we're happy to report that all six bells are up and making wonderful music again.

The Forest Bells were created by local artist and craftsman Paul Matisse in 1995, commissioned by the inaugural [Artists Valentine project](#), and installed on land owned by Arthur and Camilla Blackman. The Blackmans donated the land to the GCT in 2000, and the Trust has been the steward of the land and bells since then.

Like any piece of outdoor engineering, the Bells require attention and maintenance. Paul and his staff have been both attentive and generous in helping to keep the Bells in good working order. Over the years, we've discovered that the main spring at the top of each bell is prone to failure. When this spring breaks the hammer rests against the bell, making it impossible to ring. We've also found that the arm and hammer assembly can dent and damage the bells as they swing around.

The [rest of the story](#) explains how local arborist George Brackett, along with staff from Paul's studio repaired the bells and re-installed them high in the tree tops. Pictures of the various stages of the installation are included.

To find the Forest Bells, take Old Ayer Road south toward



**conservation, and engages residents in the enjoyment and stewardship of our remarkable natural landscapes.**

## Shepley Hill 2013 Update



On the heels of receiving a grant to support an invasive species management plan (see the lead story), Trustee David Black reports that a trial project completed last year on the Shepley Hills property (as reported in the [September 2013 newsletter](#)) was a success. The project used an herbicide treatment on Japanese barberry, applied by licensed applicator and trustee Rick Muehlke. A year later, the invasive species population has been dramatically reduced, and what barberry remains can be eliminated in a couple of hours by volunteers pulling the new plants out. In addition, native vegetation has sprouted this year over much of the site. "These results are highly encouraging," says Black as barberry is a difficult invasive species to control. "We use herbicides with great caution, and in this case they seem to have killed the target species

Ayer from Main Street near the Mobil Station.

Then, turn left onto Indian Hill Road and go all the way to the end. Park cars, but not near the house at the end. Walk back to the end and bear left up a dirt road into the trees. Continue along this road, passing under power lines and continuing down into forest. At the next obvious fork, with the main path going up to the right, turn sharp left on to the side road. About 50 yards later there are a group of fallen trees barring an old road leading uphill to the right. Walking over or around the fallen trees, follow that road up the hill. Continue until you find yourself in a grove of hemlocks, quite different from the pines and oaks all around.

### *Getting to Know* New Trustees David Pitkin and Scott Wilson



Scott Wilson and David Pitkin

The Trust welcomes two new trustees this year.

**David Pitkin** is currently the chair of the Groton Greenway Committee and a member of the Groton Trails Committee, and

previously was on the Groton Conservation Commission. His family is very active with Mass Audubon where his wife Kristin works. One of the first things the Pitkins did when they moved to Groton 10 years ago was to become a steward of the GCT Throne Hill parcel. They enjoyed a wonderful walk with (former trustee) Dann Chamberlin who impressed upon them to always to go walking with pruning shears. The GCT properties he visits most these days are Lawrence Woods, now that Fitch's Bridge is passable and Hayes Woods for running.

**Scott Wilson** has worked as is an independent communications design professional since 1975, creating branding and marketing projects for a wide range of clients. Scott was recently elected to a fourth term on the Groton Planning Board, and he co-authored Groton's current Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Since moving to Groton in 1996 he and his wife Amy Kilham have come to appreciate the unique biodiversity of this area's preserved habitat as well as the beauty of our natural landscapes. In its first fifty years the GCT has preserved and protected a significant portion of these remarkable lands and Scott is proud to join this wonderful organization so he can

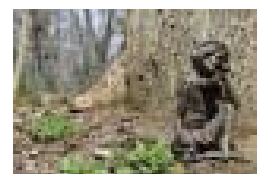
without significant damage to the larger plant community. The summer of 2014 will bring a return to the Shepley site as we expand the area covered and continue to work to increase our understanding of the most effective techniques for creating habitats dominated by native species."

### July Outdoors



Thanks to Mary Metzger, you can print an [Outdoors Groton Calendar](#) for all events in July. Enjoy!

### Harlan the Gnome is Back and Hiding!



Somewhere out there on one of the GCT's properties is Harlan, our wood Gnome. He hides until someone finds him. The first one to find him receives a \$25 gift certificate to Johnson's for ice cream. Here's a hint: right now he is 80 feet from the trail. If you spot him, **EMAIL** us to claim your prize!



make a direct and meaningful contribution to its important mission. In fact his contributions are already visible! The design of our 50th anniversary logo and the posters and ads for our anniversary events are his work. Already a member of the communications sub-committee, Scott hit the trail running!

### From the GCT President:

Conservation work is possible through a myriad of collaborations. This is especially true in a community as small as ours. We see it with the successful work we do involving state agencies like the Department of Fish and Game, national groups such as the Audubon Society, and other local groups, such as the NRWA and other conservation groups around the pipeline issue. The top story in this e-news is also an example of collaboration in action; community members coming together to fund critical land management.

Another important collaboration was cemented this month, spearheaded by GCT trustee Mark Gerath and Paul Funch of the Groton Trails Network. As you know, the trails group works to cut and maintain a vast network of trails that cross many of our properties. In a newly created agreement, the two groups sought to formalize this good work and provide a framework for future projects. Among other points, the agreement documents the long-term cooperation between our organizations in providing stewardship of the trails on the GCT parcels and clearly defining the nature of this agreement.

In this spirit of collaboration, I call your attention to our newly crafted mission statement at the right hand column. The Trustees voted unanimously to accept this updated version to celebrate our 50 years of land management and to directly acknowledge our collective responsibility for the protection of our landscape.

Dan Wolfe

### GCT Events



**August 6, 6 PM**  
Bates Land Guided Walk

**Sept. 20, 10 - 5 PM**  
GrotonFest  
Legion Field

**Nov. 8, 2-4 PM**  
GCT Birthday Bash  
Williams Barn

[MORE](#) information!

Come see us!

### Friend-Raiser!

For our 50th anniversary, we have a goal to bring on 50 new members at a \$50/family membership. Your membership says you care about the beautiful open spaces in Groton and you enjoy the recreation, the peace, and the natural habitat that is possible by maintaining these open spaces. Your annual membership helps us keep these properties beautiful, enjoyable, and most important, protected.

If you are not a member, [join today](#). Already a member? Send a friend our way! Help us make our friend-raiser goal!



**50th**

**Anniversary:**

President

Family/\$50.00

*Celebrating 50 years of land preservation*

Your contribution helps us maintain and manage the beautiful places in Groton. If you are new to the GCT this is a great year to donate \$50 in honor of our 50th anniversary! Thank you!

The Groton Conservation Trust is a private, non-profit land trust in Groton, Massachusetts. It was founded in 1964 to acquire, preserve, and provide public access to lands with significant conservation value. The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees made up of Groton residents with varied backgrounds, occupations and interests.

You are receiving this email as an interested member of the GCT. If you no longer wish to receive this email, click [HERE](#) and note "remove me" in the subject line. Thank you.

**[Forward this email](#)**

This email was sent to [susahughes@gmail.com](mailto:susahughes@gmail.com) by [susanh@gctrust.org](mailto:susanh@gctrust.org) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Try it FREE today.

Groton Conservation Trust | PO Box 395 | Groton | MA | 01450